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Seventieth year

Provisional

7389th meeting

Monday, 23 February 2015, 10 a.m.
New York

President:	Mr. Wang Yi/Mr. Wang Min/Mr. Cai Weiming	(China)
Members:	Angola	Mr. Augusto
	Chad	Mr. Mangaral
	Chile	Mr. Barros Melet
	France	Mr. Delattre
	Jordan	Mrs. Kawar
	Lithuania	Mr. Linkevičius
	Malaysia	Mr. Aman
	New Zealand	Mr. McCully
	Nigeria	Mr. Wali
	Russian Federation	Mr. Lavrov
	Spain	Mr. Ybañez
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Sir Mark Lyall Grant
	United States of America	Ms. Power
	Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of)	Mrs. Rodríguez Gómez

Agenda

Maintenance of international peace and security

Reflect on history, reaffirm the strong commitmentto the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations

Letter dated 3 February 2015 from the Permanent Representative of China to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General(S/2015/87)

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The meeting was called to order at 10.05 a.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

Maintenance of international peace and security

Reflect on history, reaffirm the strong commitment to the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations

Letter dated 3 February 2015 from the Permanent Representative of China to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General (S/2015/87)

The President (*spoke in Chinese*): I would like to warmly welcome the Secretary-General and the ministers and other representatives who are present in the Chamber. Their participation in this debate reaffirms the importance of the subject matter under discussion today.

In accordance with rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite the representatives of Albania, Algeria, Armenia, Australia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Belgium, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Botswana, Brazil, Burundi, Canada, Colombia, Costa Rica, Cuba, Cyprus, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Ecuador, Egypt, Estonia, Ethiopia, Georgia, Germany, Guatemala, Hungary, India, Indonesia, the Islamic Republic of Iran, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Japan, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Kuwait, Latvia, Liechtenstein, Maldives, Mexico, Montenegro, Morocco, the Netherlands, Nicaragua, Pakistan, Papua New Guinea, the Philippines, Poland, the Republic of Korea, Romania, Rwanda, Saudi Arabia, Serbia, Slovenia, South Africa, Sweden, Switzerland, the Syrian Arab Republic, Thailand, Tunisia, Turkey, Ukraine, the United Arab Emirates, Uruguay, Viet Nam and Zimbabwe to participate in this meeting.

In accordance with rule 39 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite His Excellency Mr. Thomas Mayr-Harting, Head of the Delegation of the European Union to the United Nations, and His Excellency Mr. Téte António, Permanent Observer of the African Union to the United Nations, to participate in this meeting.

The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda.

I wish to draw the attention of Council members to document S/2015/87, which contains a letter dated 3 February 2015 from the Permanent Representative of China to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General, transmitting a concept paper on the item under consideration.

I now give the floor to the Secretary-General.

The Secretary-General: I thank the People's Republic of China for organizing today's discussion on reaffirming commitment to the Charter in this year, in which the United Nations marks 70 years since its founding. The seventieth anniversary of the United Nations finds an Organization with major achievements to its credit, multiple crises on its agenda, and tremendous opportunities ahead. The United Nations was founded to prevent another world war, and it has succeeded in that. Despite the recurrence of genocide and repeated outbreaks of armed conflict, the past seven decades would surely have been even bloodier without the United Nations.

Peoples' lives are better in other ways, too. In most parts of the world, people are living longer, healthier lives. The empowerment of women, the advancement of international law and the spread of democratic governance have helped to improve our collective well-being. The world is starkly different than when the Charter's drafters gathered in San Francisco in 1945. The membership of the United Nations has nearly quadrupled. New Powers have emerged. Globalization, urbanization, migration, demographic shifts, technological advances, climate change and other seismic developments continue to remake our societies and transform international relations.

Yet the aspirations of "we the peoples" enshrined in the Charter remain just as valid, valuable and vital. The Charter is a living document, not a detailed road map. It is our compass, enshrining principles that have stood the test of time. At the heart of the Charter is a commitment to the prevention of armed conflict through the peaceful settlement of disputes and the protection of human rights. Collective security is the core purpose of the Organization. Unlike in 1945, however, we no longer have a full meeting of minds on what that means. We need to reflect on what has changed, and fortify our sense of unity. Decades of preventive diplomacy, mediation, peacekeeping and peacebuilding — gains and setbacks alike — have helped us to sharpen our efforts to promote peace and head off brewing crises before they become deadlier and costlier for all concerned.

The primary responsibility for preventing conflict lies with Member States. The Charter is very clear on this point, yet in too many instances Member States are still falling short. Our shared work is based on consent and respect for the sovereign equality of all Members of the United Nations, which the Charter recognizes as a basic principle. Early action to prevent conflict and protect human rights helps to strengthen sovereignty, rather than challenge or restrict it. We must ask whether, for example, earlier efforts to address human rights violations and political grievances in Syria could have kept the situation from escalating so horrendously.

A major obstacle to United Nations human rights action has been a concern among Member States that such action may harm national sovereignty. In reality, it is serious violations of human rights that weaken sovereignty. Such abuses kill and displace people, divide communities, undermine economies and destroy cultural heritage. They silence the Government officials, parliamentarians, civil servants, judges and others who lead national institutions that are essential to sovereignty.

The primary goal of United Nations action on human rights is to support all these actors. Doing so is, most fundamentally, a support to national sovereignty. A conceptual shift in how we understand United Nations human rights action could have a positive and, indeed, transformational effect on the role of the Security Council in peace and security. We must be willing to act before situations deteriorate. This is both a moral responsibility and critical to the maintenance of international peace and security. We cannot afford to be indifferent.

Let us also recognize that the exercise of sovereignty brings with it important responsibilities. Governments earn, sustain and strengthen their sovereignty by being accountable to their people, upholding human rights, ensuring the rule of law and practicing inclusive governance. Moreover, governing responsibly is not just a domestic challenge; it means recognizing our interconnectedness and being a good regional and global citizen.

On so many issues, from climate change to commerce and communications, from environmental degradation to public health, the distinctions between the national and the international are falling away. Terrorism and extremism have emerged as serious transnational threats. At last Thursday's Washington, D.C., meeting on violent extremism, I highlighted the need to respond decisively and to combat extremism without multiplying the problem and with full respect for human rights. Sovereignty remains part of the bedrock of international order, but in today's world the less sovereignty is viewed as a wall or a shield, the better our prospects will be for protecting people and solving our shared problems.

We should use this year's observance of the seventieth anniversary of the United Nations to seriously reflect on our common enterprise — on peace operations, peacebuilding, women's empowerment, disaster risk reduction and much else. We should also seize this year's opportunities to take transformative action on sustainable development and climate change. In all these efforts, we should bear in mind that the three opening words of the Charter make clear who is the driving force behind the United Nations — "We the peoples". Let us reaffirm our duty to serve those peoples with all our creativity and will. Let us reaffirm our commitment to each other in the great cause of living together in dignity and peace for all.

The President (*spoke in Chinese*): I thank the Secretary-General for his statement.

I shall now make a statement in my capacity as the Minister for Foreign Affairs of China.

This year marks the seventieth anniversary of the victory of the World War against fascism and the founding of the United Nations. It is an important year for countries all over the world to celebrate, and represents an historic opportunity to reflect on the past and look to the future. China, which has holds the presidency of the Security Council for this month, has proposed convened this open debate in order to join hands with all countries to draw lessons from history and chart the course for the future. Drawing on lessons from history means reaffirming the solemn commitment to the Charter of the United Nations and sparing succeeding generations from the scourge of war, which twice in our lifetimes has brought untold sorrow to humankind. Charting a course towards the future means joining hands and building a new type of international relations centred on win-win cooperation in order to achieve the lofty goal of living together in peace with each other as good neighbours.

Seventy years ago, the great victory in the world anti-fascist war was won. As a result of arduous struggle, justice prevailed over evil and peace was restored in the world. In that unprecedented calamity of human history, China was an important force in the world anti-fascist alliance, as well as the main theatre in the East. Together with other countries, China endured great national sacrifice and made a significant historic contribution to the final victory. Let us pay tribute here to all the heroic men and women who laid down their lives to uphold peace, dignity and freedom for humankind.

The victory won 70 years ago has changed our world profoundly ever since. In the process of peoples' reflecting on the past and envisioning the future, the United Nations came into being and ushered in a new chapter of solidarity among humankind and progress in international relations. We will always remember that, on 25 June 1945, the San Francisco Conference unanimously adopted the Charter of the United Nations, which set out an ambitious blueprint for the peoples of the United Nations to come together to build a better world.

The Charter affirms the strong determination of the international community to prevent war and maintain lasting peace. At the outset, the Charter defined the purposes of the United Nations as maintaining international peace and security, which embodies the world's deep reflection about the two World Wars and the great yearning of all countries to be free of war, free and want. For 70 years, the Charter has inspired one generation after another to make unrelenting efforts towards the lofty cause of world peace.

The Charter defines the basic norms governing contemporary international relations. It clearly sets forth the principles of sovereign equality, non-interference in internal affairs and respect for territorial integrity. It also advocates that disputes be settled through peaceful means, that countries should refrain from the use or threat of force and that threats to security should be removed through cooperation. Those basic norms serve the fundamental collective interests of all countries and peoples. Although enshrined in the Charter 70 years ago, they still have great relevance today and continue to play an indispensable role in maintaining world stability and tranquillity.

The Charter puts in place safeguard mechanisms to prevent war and preserve peace. It identifies the rights, responsibilities and duties of United Nations agencies and Member States. It authorizes the Security Council to assume the primary responsibility for the upholding international peace and security. And it provides that coercive measures must have a mandate from the Security Council and that collective security mechanisms shall replace traditional military alliances and the outdated law of the jungle.

The wheels of history continue to roll forward. Time flies and 70 years have passed. It is true that humankind has made significant progress in the cause of peace and development, but the beautiful vision set forth in the Charter is yet to be fully realized. Although world war has been averted, local wars and various conflicts have been incessant and non-traditional security threats such as terrorism crop up one after another. Although the world economy has grown markedly, the gap between the haves and the have-nots remains prominent, and new global challenges, including climate change, continue to emerge. Although multilateralism has become the prevailing trend, inequality and a lack of democracy continue to exist in international relations, while the norms that govern international relations are violated from time to time. In addition, although the historical facts have long been made clear on the war against fascism, there are still some who are reluctant to recognize the truth and even attempt to overturn the verdict and whitewash past crimes of aggression.

Today, 70 years after its establishment, the Charter of the United Nations remains as relevant as ever. Not only should we stay true to the spirit of the Charter, we also need to act in accordance with the trends of the time and in line with practical needs, so as to add new dimensions to the Charter and confer upon it new dynamism and vitality. Over the past 70 years, China, a founding Member of the United Nations and a permanent member of the Security Council, has always been steadfast in upholding the spirit of the Charter, supporting the role of the United Nations and safeguarding world peace and stability. Not long ago, Chinese President Xi Jinping put forward the vision for a new type of international relations with win-win cooperation at its core. The idea is built on the purposes and principles of the Charter and, more important, it enriches it with new dimensions. In that regard, I would like to highlight the following principles for developing international relations in the twenty-first century.

First, we should maintain peace and prevent conflict. Some regions in the world today are still plagued by turbulence and conflict. The sensible way out of way out of that is to continue to observe the purposes and principles of the Charter, as well as the sanctity of the United Nations and the Security Council. In China's view, any unilateral move that bypasses the Security Council is illegal and illegitimate. The Council needs to take more precautionary measures to forestall conflict and act in a timely manner to stop war in order to restore peace and promote reconstruction as early as possible.

Secondly, we should opt for cooperation and not confrontation. We live in an increasingly globalized world in which the spread of information technology is growing with every passing day. Facing the mounting global challenges, countries are left with no choice but to join hands and meet challenges together through cooperation. China calls upon all countries, major countries in particular, to rally behind the need for greater international cooperation. The old mindset of confrontation should be discarded and consultation and cooperation among parties should be encouraged, if we are to address the major issues affecting world and regional peace and development.

Thirdly, we should ensure that justice and not hegemony prevails throughout the world. The call of the time is for greater democracy and the rule of law in international relations. No country in the world is entitled to impose its will on others or to topple the legitimate Governments of other countries. China believes that all countries are equal regardless of their size or wealth. All countries' sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity should be respected. Their choice of a development path and social system should be upheld. International law and norms governing international relations should be genuinely honoured and the diversity of the world's civilizations should be respected.

Fourthly, we should work together with a win-win, not a zero-sum, approach. In today's world, countries are more interdependent than ever, with their interests increasingly intertwined. Antiquated thinking such as the Cold War mentality and zero-sum games should long ago have been relegated to the trash bin of history. China advocates a new thinking of win-win and all-win cooperation, as well as a new concept of community-building for shared interests and a common destiny. We call upon all countries to come together to share rights and obligations and uphold justice while pursuing interests. In that way we will usher in a new world in which the interests of individual countries and those of others and of the wider international community can all be properly safeguarded.

Today we are in the midst of the traditional Chinese spring festival, which is the best time to plan for the entire new year to come. I hope that today's open debate will serve as prelude to our joint commemoration of the seventieth anniversary of the victory in the world anti-fascist war and the seventieth anniversary of the founding of the United Nations. May the spirit of the Charter shine upon the Earth and may the vision of win-win cooperation flourish across the world.

I now resume my functions as President of the Council.

I shall now give the floor to the other members of the Security Council.

I call on the Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation.

Mr. Lavrov (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): I would like to start by conveying my gratitude to Mr. Wang Yi, Minister for Foreign Affairs of China, for having organized today's debate. The theme proposed for discussion today is a very timely one on the eve of the seventieth anniversary of the founding of the United Nations, and it allows us to critically assess the state of international relations and discuss ways of overcoming its accumulated systemic problems.

The Charter of the United Nations is the fruit of the great victory over Nazism and remains the cornerstone of the entire international system. Its list of purposes and principles and the rules internationalt contains represent a substantial source of international law, the basis for the code of conduct of States on the world stafe and the foundation for the ever-growing system of international agreements and treaties.

Of course the United Nations is not perfect, but as Dag Hammarskjöld said, it was not created to take humankind to heaven, but to save it from hell. The Charter of the United Nations set out for the first time the principles for an operationally viable mechanism for global governance on the basis of agreement among the positions of leading States. In other words, it enshrined key elements for a polycentric world order. For the first four decades, the United Nations operated under difficult conditions of bipolar confrontation. At the same time, after the end of the Cold War, no objective reasons remained to prevent the Security Council from becoming the effective platform for elaborating and crafting the collective will of the international community. Unfortunately, the path to implementing that objective has turned out to be a great deal more complex and tortuous than it seemed it would be a quarter of a century ago.

We have before our eyes many examples of violations of the fundamental principles of the United Nations, such as the independence and sovereign equality of States, non-interference in their internal affairs and the peaceful settlement of disputes. Suffice it to recall the bombing in Syria, the occupation of Iraq under obviously false pretences — the consequences of which continue to take a heavy toll on the population of that country — and the brazen manipulation of the Security Council's mandate that led to the destruction and ongoing chaos in Libya. All of those were the result of attempts to dominate global affairs, to rule over everyone everywhere, to use military force unilaterally and to push and advance singular interests.

Such approaches are in no way in keeping with the principles on which the United Nations is based, and ignore the clear and increasing threat of the spread of hegemonic economic and political might. In the search for an illusory global dominance, unsavory methods are employed, including mass pressure on sovereign States and attempts to impose one's own decisions and political, economic and ideological standards on them. For those not wishing to play ball, various methods are employed, including regime change, as was the case with the open support for the unconstitutional State coup in Ukraine a year ago.

Persistent efforts have been undertaken to turn the Security Council into a body that would rubberstamp the decisions of the leader, and as that is simply not working, they are attempting to move the Security Council away from elaborating policies on major issues within its competence, namely, the maintenance of international peace and security. In doing so, the lessons of the unilateral use of force from the very recent past are being ignored. Those actions have plunged the Middle East and North Africa into instability and chaos and, to a large extent, created a breeding ground in which extremists thrive.

The sanctions mechanisms established pursuant to the Charter are the exclusive purview of the Security Council. Unilateral restrictive measures and attempts at the extraterritorial use of national legislation are nothing more than the manifestation of an archaic way of thinking. They have led to an increase in confrontations and tensions in international affairs and complicated the joint quest for solutions to emerging problems.

An element that is seriously poisoning international relations is the unfolding war for the use of international media, the Internet and social networks. I am convinced that the freedom of expression and thought is not something that should justify the manipulation of information, brainwashing and efforts to undermine States and their policies, or that should be used to fan the flames of religious enmity.

The time has come to respond to a simple question: do we want to see the Security Council as an effective, influential instrument for the maintenance of international peace and security, or are we prepared to allow it to become a forum for propagandistic confrontation. In the latter case, the Council will be excluded from the search for international solutions. That will have a negative impact on other international regional platforms and will further weaken our prospects for resolving current problems.

We believe there is a need to immediately take decisive measures to eliminate double standards from global policy and allow the Security Council to resume its role as a leading body in the search for collective solutions based on respect for the cultures and civilizations of today's world and for democracy in international relations.

We must all recognize that people have the right to independently decide on their future without external interference. In that respect, I propose that we think about strengthening and adopting relevant provisions set out in what was adopted in 1970, namely, the Declaration on Principles of International Law concerning Friendly Relations and Cooperation among States in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations. In doing so, we should focus in particular on the fact that support for unconstitutional coups is unacceptable.

We must reach agreement on how we are going to achieve, on the basis of the Charter, a joint management of risks in the context of an increasingly complex system of international relations. At the beginning of the 1990s, the Secretariat prepared a guide on the peaceful settlement of disputes between States. Perhaps the time has now come to update that publication to take into account the experience that has been gained since then.

Positive results will be achieved only when members of the Security Council pool their efforts to find consensus positions. It is on that basis that we were able to resolve the main issues surrounding the elimination of chemical weapons in Syria and to elaborate measures to counter the phenomenon of foreign terrorist fighters. A few days ago, upon Russia's initiative, the Council adopted resolution 2199 (2015), which is aimed at suppressing the financing of terrorist groups through the proceeds of the illegal oil trade. Recent examples in this regard include the deployment of new peacekeeping presences in Mali and the Central African Republic. We are now closely tackling another hotspot issue in Africa: suppressing the terrorist threat posed by Boko Haram. We expect that useful recommendations on how to render the United Nations peacekeeping operations more effective will result from the Secretary-General's special high-level group.

On the whole, it would be useful to list the global challenges and threats that can only be effectively countered jointly. Among the main priorities on that list is an issue that has become a huge threat, namely, terrorism, especially in the Middle East and North Africa and spreading in the direction of Southern Africa, Asia and Europe. Unilateral actions in that respect are without any great prospect. That much is clear. The problem must be resolved within the framework of the United Nations and on the basis of its Charter. We are against attempts to move the counter-terrorist fight out of the intergovernmental arena and to enforce plans of action that have been elaborated in limited formats upon the international community. I hope that today's debate will serve as a serious discussion on the future of our universal Organization as the most important mechanism for governing international relations today.

The President (*spoke in Chinese*): I now give the floor to the Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela.

Mrs. Rodríguez Gómez (Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela) (*spoke in Spanish*): I would like to convey warm greetings to you, Sir, as President of the Security Council, as we know how committed the People's Republic of China is to peace, justice and development for humankind. I also convey to you and the Secretary-General, on behalf of the President of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, Mr. Nicolás Maduro Moros, our commitment to continue to move ahead, historically and constitutionally, towards social justice, the maintenance of international peace and cooperation through solidarity and respect for peoples' self-determination and the sovereign equality and territorial integrity of States.

The matter that brings us here today is more relevant than ever in a world that presents challenges that call into question peace and security. We would like to recall that, on the occasion of the twentieth anniversary of the United Nations, a declaration was adopted that prohibits intervention in the internal affairs of States and declares respect for the sovereignty and independence of States. Furthermore, on the occasion of the Organization's twenty-fifth anniversary, a declaration was adopted that proclaimed that the only manner in which we can achieve the purposes of the United Nations is if States can actualize themselves in full sovereign equality.

I would like to pause here, because we do know — and the international community can bear witness to this fact — that unilateral actions, which are manifested through ongoing warfare, including economic, media and financial warfare, seek to subject peoples, with the sole objective of seizing natural resources and thus satisfying the hegemonic desires of foreign Powers. It is with much amazement and concern that we recently heard statements by warmongers and those who would twist our arms that confirmed — and we would like to condemn this here today — the fact that violations of international law and the purposes and principles that inspire the Organization and its founding Charter.

The so-called fight against terrorism has resulted in more terrorism.

Terrorist acts have also undermined the human rights of millions of citizens. We call for a peaceful settlement of conflicts, in keeping with the spirit of the United Nations and as set out in its Charter. The citizens on the streets of our countries and in some regions often do not know whether they will be the victims of a terrorist attack or fall victim to supposed violent acts against those terrorist organizations.

I should like to draw attention to statistics from the Stockholm International Institute on global military expenditure, which in 2013 alone reached the astronomical figure of $1.747 trillion. Even more shocking, 37 per cent of the funds allocated to military expenditure are concentrated in just one country. We wish to draw attention to the relationship between that military expenditure and the true achievement of international peace and security.

We can say that, fortunately, Venezuela is a part of a region that is considered a zone free of violence, where, furthermore, we have innovative mechanisms for integration and interrelation that are based on respect among States and for the sovereignty of States, respect for the self-determination of peoples and respect for the territorial integrity of nations. We would recall that we are the region that has the lowest level of military expenditure in the world. We support disarmament in all its expressions and have been declared the first region free of nuclear weapons.

Today we call once again for a multilateralism that is based on public international law and on the purposes and principles of the United Nations. We also reaffirm the legitimate right of the State of Palestine to be a full-fledged member of the Organization, on the basis also of the purposes and principles of the United Nations and international law. We therefore condemn the fact that in the twenty-first century there still exist antiquated or new forms of colonialism, or any form of discrimination. Even among these foreign Powers, we can today see serious cases of racial discrimination.

For that reason, we embrace once again the spirit of the late Hugo Chavez Frias, our former President, who proposed that the United Nations be reformed so as to be more democratic, so that all developing countries can discuss sensitive matters such as international peace and security democratically within the Organization.

I would recall further what President Nicolás Maduro said when he spoke during the most recent general debate of the General Assembly (see A/69/PV.8). He called on the United Nations to adapt its institutions in such a manner as to promote the sovereignty of peoples, if we wish to truly achieve much-wished-for peace and a world that is safe and free of violence.

I should like to reiterate the words of the late President Chavez, speaking here at the United Nations:

> "Well, we shall fight for Venezuela, for Latin American integration and for the world. Here in this room, we declare our infinite faith in man, who longs for peace and justice in order to survive as a species. Simón Bolívar, our liberator and the guide of our revolution, swore that he would not rest until he saw America free. Let us not rest in body or in soul until we have saved humanity." (*A/60/PV.6, p. 20*)

I would also paraphrase Gandhi, who said that there is no road to peace; peace is the only possible road.

The President (*spoke in Chinese*): I now give the floor to the Minister for Foreign Affairs of New Zealand.

Mr. McCully (New Zealand): New Zealand congratulates China for this initiative. We agree that this is the right time for the Council to undertake a measure of serious self-examination and to assess where we are performing well and where we are not. We agree that the Council needs to do much better. That is clearly the view of United Nations Members.

With others around this table, New Zealand has just experienced the invigorating process of seeking support from Members to win election to the Council. We have not been left in doubt as to the desire of Member States to see the Council lift its game.

The Council is charged with responding to threats to international peace and security. Yet in relation to too many of those current threats, the Council has dealt itself out of its proper role. Where it is involved, it has often been too late. The Council has a completely inadequate focus on conflict prevention and a huge focus on peacekeeping. Peacekeepers are hampered and sometimes endangered by poor mandates and inadequate resourcing. Too many of the cases on the peacekeeping agenda have become part of a revolving list of routine items rather than serious problems that we really expect to solve.

These challenges to the Council's ability to live up to its mandate in relation to international peace and security are longstanding and complex — some would say intractable. But we believe that it is within the Council's reach to make real progress.

As we move towards the seventieth anniversary of the establishment of the Council, we should listen to the United Nations membership, including the smaller members, which are often not heard. We should hear their disappointment and their frustration. We should resolve to use this anniversary year of the Council to take action.

We believe that there are three simple areas in which the Council could take action this year.

My first point is that the use of the veto or the threat of the veto is the single largest cause of the Security Council being rendered impotent in the face of too many serious international conflicts. Whether we are talking about Syria or the Middle East peace process, the veto's impact today far exceeds what was envisaged in the United Nations Charter — to the huge detriment of the Council's effectiveness and credibility.

We congratulate France on its initiative on the voluntary retirement of the veto in the case of mass atrocities. We urge the permanent members to use this anniversary year to find a way to make progress. While it is difficult, the future credibility of the Organization depends on it.

My second and related point is the Council's lack of preventive action under Chapter VI, which is again partly the result of the pervasive impact of the veto. Conflict is costly in terms of human lives, reconstruction costs and lost opportunities for development. There is something wrong when we are spending over $8 billion per year on peacekeeping but virtually nothing on the responsibility to prevent situations escalating into intractable conflict.

My third point is that we must recognize and address a major weakness in relation to peacekeeping. We cannot send peacekeepers into dangerous environments without adequate mandates and resources. The review of peace operations being led by former President Ramos-Horta will set the scene for the Council to address that issue this year.

The 15 of us at this table can do more. We can solve these issues. We must solve them. The perception of a failure to act impacts negatively on the reputations of both the Council and the United Nations itself. It is time for us to confront the root causes that have seen the Council avoid the challenging task of conflict prevention simply because the politics and the diplomacy have been too difficult.

New Zealand is ready to work with fellow Council members to make real progress in addressing these issues. Only then will we, the Council, have earned the right to celebrate the seventieth anniversary of this body being conferred the primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security.

The President (*spoke in Chinese*): I now give the floor to the Foreign Minister of Malaysia.

Mr. Aman (Malaysia): At the outset, Mr. President, I would like to congratulate you and the Chinese delegation on China's assumption of the presidency of the Security Council for the month of February. I would also like to thank the Secretary-General, His Excellency Mr. Ban Ki-moon, for his briefing.

Malaysia is pleased to note that under China's presidency thus far, the Council has taken some important decisions and had productive discussions on a number of issues and situations around the world. I understand that discussions on a number of very challenging situations are ongoing, and I wish the Council success in its deliberations. I also take this opportunity, Mr. President, to wish you a belated happy Chinese New Year, and I hope the Year of the Golden Sheep brings much success, happiness and prosperity to one and all.

The concept note (S/2015/87, annex) circulated ahead of our discussion today outlined five broad thematic areas. In my view, a full discussion of the themes and issues related to them would certainly not be possible today, given the time constraints. That being the case, I intend to focus on just a few key issues, with a view to contributing to the wider discussions.

First, Malaysia welcomes today's debate and believes it affords a timely opportunity for the Council to take stock of its achievements so far and to reflect on the challenges it faces in its continuing mission of maintaining international peace and security. Such reflection, in our view, is both necessary and urgent, given the increasingly complex and multidimensional nature of the new and emerging threats and challenges to international peace and security that we face as a global community and must address together. Almost 70 years after the Council was established, it seems clear that the threats and challenges it faces in 2015 are different from those it faced earlier and perhaps equally complex, if not more so.

From a historical perspective, Malaysia holds the view that the Council has a mixed record in terms of discharging its Charter-mandated roles and responsibilities. During the Cold War period, the Council appeared paralysed by numerous conflicts that were fought around the world, many of which were ideologically motivated proxy wars. We recall the frustration and despair felt at the seeming powerlessness of the Council and the United Nations to act in the face of atrocities perpetrated by the likes of the Khmer

Rouge and former regimes in Latin America, as well as the crimes against humanity witnessed in Bosnia and Rwanda, among others — not to mention the still desperate situation in Palestine, which has remained unresolved for almost as long as the Council and the United Nations have been in existence.

The exuberance and, some say, the triumphal optimism demonstrated when the Soviet bloc collapsed in the early 1990s nurtured nascent hopes that a new, multipolar system would succeed the previous bipolar order. Fast-forward to the present day, and we see that the continuing military and economic preponderance of certain States over others continues to dominate and shape international discourse and policymaking at the macro level — although we should note that that preponderance appears to have been both bolstered and, to a certain extent, constrained by the advent of globalization.

Globalization, particularly seen in terms of the widespread reach and use of communications and information technology and transportation, has undoubtedly had a multiplier effect in terms of States' abilities to reach out and benefit not only their own people but also others elsewhere. In Malaysia's view, these positive gains must be preserved and further built on by all States. In that context, it is worth noting that later this year the United Nations is expected to discuss and decide on, among other things, a package of sustainable development goals aimed at further improving the well-being of our peoples. While globalization has undeniably brought about positive developments and advances in many different areas, there are those who would pervert, manipulate and misuse advances such as those in the fields of science, medicine and communications and information technology in the service of a darker, more destructive agenda.

In Malaysia's view, the rise of non-State actors — terrorists in particular — who seek to harness the very features that characterize our interconnected, interrelated and globalized world and use them to sow terror, hatred and chaos is one of the defining and urgent challenges that the international community must address today. Events and developments across the globe in recent years have illustrated the virulence of terrorists and terrorism and how quickly they can become malignant. Whereas in the past terrorism was employed in pursuit of political or ideological goals, the new breed of terrorist is no longer content with such aims. They now seek to control territory and populations, perhaps with a view to attaining equal status with other States.

Such ambitions are against the purposes and principles laid down in the Charter of the United Nations. Beyond the terrorists' brutal and inhumane actions, their attempts to establish so-called States run counter to Charter principles, including those of friendly relations among States, refraining from the use of force, and respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, among others. In view of such a direct challenge to core United Nations principles, all States must renew their commitment to acting in a coordinated and concerted manner to counter it. The threat of terrorism is not one that any of us can hope to overcome on our own. In that connection, we note the success of the recent Summit on Countering Violent Extremism hosted by the United States. Malaysia is also encouraged to note the pioneering steps taken by the African Union and the members of the Lake Chad Basin Commission — Cameroon, Chad, the Niger and Nigeria — with Benin to operationalize a multinational joint task force to counter the threat posed by Boko Haram. The actions of those countries merit the international community's full support and stand out as an affirmation of Charter principles, including those laid out in Chapter VIII.

In focusing on the seemingly disparate issues of globalization and terrorism and how they could intersect and, unfortunately, have intersected, I have sought to highlight the fact that while the nature of the threats to international peace and security, and our understanding of them, has clearly evolved over time, the purposes and principles enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations remain relevant and applicable. As we commemorate the seventieth anniversary of the founding of the United Nations, Malaysia emphasizes the need for the Council to meet the increasingly complex and multidimensional threats to international peace and security. In Malaysia's view, the Council's continuing ability to be flexible and adaptable is key to ensuring its effective and efficient discharge of its Charter-mandated roles and responsibilities. We hold the view that certain aspects of the Council's work — including its transparency and accessibility, especially for non-members and stakeholders — could be improved.

I would like to conclude by reaffirming Malaysia's commitment to continuing to uphold the purposes and principles enshrined in the Charter and to working closely and constructively with Council members, partners and stakeholders to that end.

The President (*spoke in Chinese*): I now give the floor to the Foreign Minister of Lithuania.

Mr. Linkevičius (Lithuania): I would like to thank the Secretary-General for his briefing and to wish you, Mr. President, and all of us a Happy New Year of the Golden Sheep.

On 24 October 1945, the United Nations came into existence in response to the unspeakable horrors of the Second World War, which left the indelible scar of the Holocaust on the conscience of humankind and caused as many as 80 million deaths. Addressing the United Nations Conference on International Organization in San Francisco earlier that year, President Truman stressed that with ever-increasing brutality and destruction, modern warfare, if unchecked, would ultimately crush all civilization. He said,

> "We still have a choice between the alternatives: the continuation of international chaos, or the establishment of a world organization for the enforcement of peace."

When the Charter of the United Nations was signed on June 26 1945 by 50 nations, Lithuania was not among them, owing to Soviet occupation. While others were celebrating the fall of Hitler's monstrous regime and engaging in the creation of a new world order, Lithuania's future was being hijacked by Stalin's totalitarian grip. During Stalin's rule, up to 300,000 Lithuanians were deported, exiled and locked up in Soviet gulags in the most remote parts of Siberia, the Arctic Circle and Central Asia. Farmers, teachers, public servants, housewives and entire families were rounded up, barely given time to collect their belongings, and hoarded onto cattle wagons. Many died of starvation and diseases along the way. Most were never to see Lithuania or their families again.

My people were not the only ones affected. At least 14 million people of various nationalities were sent to Soviet gulags from 1929 to 1953, with a further 7 to 8 million deported and exiled to the most remote areas of the Soviet empire. Induced famine and starvation, including the Holodomor in Ukraine, were used to subdue those whom Stalin's regime considered its enemies.

While we pay our tribute and respect to the sacrifice of the Allied forces that defeated Hitler, we also remember all of those whose lives were taken by all the totalitarian regimes of the twentieth century.

Five decades later, Lithuania broke free from captivity. Next month, Lithuania will celebrate the twenty-fifth anniversary of the restoration of independence — the longest period we have ever been free in modern time. In the context of Russia's attempts to rewrite history and reverse the transitions of the 1990s, the twenty-fifth anniversary is even more precious. It also reminds us that the international community should not lower its guard. The United Nations came into existence in order to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war and to ensure, by the acceptance of principles and the institution of methods, that armed force shall not be used, save in the common interest. What we are seeing in Europe today, however, is Russia's military might being used in violation of the sovereign rights of States.

To small countries in particular, respect for the provisions of the Charter of the United Nations and international legal norms is paramount. We do not have the tanks, Grad missiles, Tornados or the multiple rocket launchers and heavy weaponry, the likes of which are ravaging the eastern part of Ukraine as we speak. Respect for international law and the principles and norms enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations is our first line of defence.

It is therefore particularly disturbing to see these norms and principles and the Charter itself being violated by a permanent member of the Security Council. The exclusive status of the five permanent members was granted so that they could act as custodians of the higher interest of peace, that common interest of which the Charter speaks so clearly. It is not for Russia to pressure or wage war against its neighbours. Indeed, 70 years after the end of the Second World War, Russia, which suffered tremendously from that war, should know better than to risk international peace and stability for the sake of redrawing Europe's borders by violence and force.

From eastern Ukraine to Moldova's Transnistria, to Georgia's Abkhazia and South Ossetia regions, a pattern exists of Russia's interference in the sovereign affairs of neighbouring States. For a year now, Ukraine has been under attack by Russian commandos and mercenaries, supported by tanks, heavy weaponry, equipment and supplies.

A year ago, as Crimea was being annexed by force and falsehood, Lithuania called for the first Council meeting on Ukraine. The Council has since held at least 30 meetings on the situation in Ukraine, but little has changed on the ground. Even as we speak, Russian proxies continue to violate the latest ceasefire agreement, in violation of resolution 2202 (2015). Russian arms and Russian humanitarian convoys continue to flow across the borders into the militants' hands. The geographical area of violent provocations is expanding beyond the ceasefire line, as seen from yesterday's terrorist bombing attack in Kharkiv.

Thousands are dead and millions displaced as Russia continues to stoke incitement and hate against the Ukrainian people, whose only fault is their desire to choose a European path of development. The anti-Ukrainian rhetoric is disturbing. Only because the Ukrainians wanted a clear break from the corruption and cronyism of the past, have they been branded as fascists. The peaceful protests in the Maidan, whose anniversary was marked this past weekend, has been referred to as an extremist coup. Let us be clear. The desire of a nation to decide its own future is not a crime. The acceptance of European values is not a crime. The Kremlin's propagandistic manipulation of the fascist card, which has been used from time to time, is irresponsible and highly dangerous, especially as part of efforts to whitewash the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact.

As we approach the seventieth anniversary of the United Nations, all States, without exception, must recommit unequivocally and clearly to the values enshrined in the Charter and to the norms and principles of international law. Anything less — especially attempts to redraw today's international borders — would constitute a betrayal of the memory of those who brought us peace 70 years ago at the cost of their lives, and betrayal of our future as humankind.

To quote President Truman in his address to the San Francisco Conference exactly 70 years ago:

> "We must not continue to sacrifice the flower of our youth merely to check madmen, those who in every age plan world domination. The sacrifices of our youth today must lead, through your efforts, to the building for tomorrow of a mighty combination of nations founded upon justice — on peace."

The President (*spoke in Chinese*): I now call on the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Nigeria.

Mr. Wali (Nigeria): I thank you, Mr. President, for organizing this important debate and for inviting me to participate in it. I also thank your delegation for the excellent concept note (S/2015/87, annex) provided to guide our discussion. Let me also commend the Secretary-General for his well-informed briefing.

As we look forward to celebrating this year the seventieth anniversary of the founding of the United Nations, reflecting on history and reaffirming our strong commitment to the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations becomes not only a desirable exercise but, indeed, an obligation. As rightly noted in the concept note, the United Nations has endured many trials and traversed an extraordinary journey. Despite those trials, the United Nations has remained an indispensable instrument for the good of humankind. We cannot envisage a world without it.

The Charter, as the primary instrument binding on all Member States, has stood the test of time. Its pre-eminence as an international treaty is affirmed by Article 103, which places the obligations of Member States under the Charter over and above their obligations under any other international agreement or treaty. Despite its pre-eminence, however, we have oftentimes seen cases where the Charter has played a secondary role to national political expedience, where international law has been interpreted in accordance with the national interest and objectives have been pursued not in compliance with the purposes and principles of the Charter.

Nigeria firmly believes that there can be no substitute to Charter principles, especially concerning State sovereignty and all its ramifications under international law. Respect for State sovereignty and territorial integrity forms the very foundation of the United Nations and remains at the core of the operating principles of international law. We cannot dispose with that for any reason, and we shall continue to defend it as the most elemental obligation of all States to protect and advocate.

The purposes of the United Nations as stated in the Charter are as relevant today as they were in 1945, when the world was just emerging from a disastrous war. For the United Nations to achieve its purpose of maintaining international peace and security, human rights and sustainable development, all Member States must show a strong commitment to acting on the international stage in a manner that does not undermine or diminish the effectiveness of the Charter of the United Nations.

Acts of aggression and other hostile acts inimical to international peace and security remain veritable threats to the aspirations of the Charter. Where disputes arise, it is essential that Member States use exclusively pacific means to resolve them. That is the only path to achieving solutions that will endure. Dialogue and negotiation offer more reassuring guarantees of lasting peace than the use or threat of use of force.

The Security Council, as the principal organ of the United Nations, is charged with the primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security, and is therefore in a unique position to promote the peaceful resolution of disputes. The Council should explore all avenues for achieving that. It should also remain open to collaboration with other global players, including regional and subregional organizations that have a significant role to play in the pacific settlement of disputes.

It is important to reiterate that all United Nations States Members should respect the sovereignty of other States and refrain from actions that may infringe upon it. Sovereign States under international law are meant to have control over their domestic affairs without the fear or threat of external interference. That is a hallmark of political independence and it must be respected by all Member States. It is a breach of that principle that has been responsible for so many of the incidents of conflict and instability around the world.

Contemporary international relations are becoming increasingly complex, with multiple overlapping dimensions. That sometimes leads to competition and a clash of interests among States. Against that backdrop, the way to minimize the risk of conflict in the conduct of international relations is for States to act in accordance with international law at all times. Experience shows that attempts to distort international law on the basis of national interests can generate tension and even lead to conflict between States. Nigeria therefore enjoins all States to respect their obligations under international law. Mutually beneficial cooperation leading to development, peace and security should be preferred over and above competition irrevocably.

In a world that is fast becoming singular by virtue of scientific and technological advances, accelerated means of travel and instantaneous communication, the development and prosperity of all countries and peoples should constitute the foundation of our common security. We are convinced of the need for all countries to have a fair chance to develop and improve the lives of their citizens. As we reach the target date for the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), deep disparities still exist between the global North and the global South. Those disparities can be seen across a broad range of indices, including life expectancy, infant and maternal mortality, per capita income, access to health care, access to clean drinking water and in many other areas. Clearly, more needs to be done to promote development in the global South. The United Nations with its agencies, funds and programmes is in a unique position to lead that effort. Indeed, the Charter recognizes the need for the Organization to promote international cooperation in solving international problems, including problems of an economic nature. It is appropriate, therefore, that the United Nations is leading the global effort to elaborate the post-2015 development agenda, the sustainable development goals and the successive frameworks to the MDGs.

Allow me once again to congratulate you, Mr. President, for convening this important debate on the critical issue of the pre-eminence of the Charter of the United Nations. It is Nigeria's hope that, as we steadily and assuredly move the United Nations upward to loftier heights, we will ensure that its ability to solve global challenges, particularly those of peace and security, will be enhanced and made more effective.

Ms. Power (United States of America): I wish to thank Minister Lavrov, Minister Rodríguez Gómez, Minister McCully, Minister Aman, Minister Linkevičius and Minister Wali for participating in this debate. Above all, I thank Minister Wang Yi for coming to the United Nations to preside over this important discussion.

The drafters of the Charter of the United Nations viewed the purposes and principles of the United Nations as "a test for the effectiveness of the Organization". It is a testament to their enduring relevance that, as we gather in the Council nearly 70 years later, the same purposes and principles continue to guide the Organization and provide that crucial measure of our collective effectiveness.

As many here know, the very first words of the Preamble to the Charter are "We the peoples of the

United Nations". It is all too easy in our debates in the Council and across the United Nations to lose sight of the people whose rights and welfare are dramatically affected by the degree to which we fulfil the Charter's ambitious mandate. To recommit ourselves to the purposes and principles is to recommit ourselves to the people, individuals in every one of our States, whose basic dignity the Charter is meant to defend and uphold. I should like to highlight three ways the United Nations and its Member States can and must improve our effectiveness in working together towards that noble and necessary aspiration.

First, the Security Council must play the robust role set out for it by the Charter to maintain or restore international peace and security, and it must take actions when circumstances demand it. Yet, too often the Council has not lived up to that primary responsibility. Consider Syria. When the Al-Assad regime launches deadly attacks on peaceful protesters, when it tortures tens of thousands of detainees in its prisons, when it employs openly starve-or-surrender tactics that inflict a devastating toll on civilians, amid all of that, divisions among Member States continue to prevent the Council from taking action to stop the regime from attacking civilians or even speaking in one voice to condemn the violence and call for meaningful accountability. As a result, we have let down the people at the heart of the Charter.

Secondly, Member States shall "fulfil in good faith the obligations assumed by them in accordance with the Charter", including the obligation to accept and carry out the decisions of the Council and must "give the United Nations every assistance in any action it takes in accordance with the Charter". We have shown the ability to leverage those obligations to good effect as arms embargoes in the Central African Republic and the Democratic Republic of the Congo are making it harder for armed actors to get the weapons they have used to commit atrocities. Other measures, like the ban on the trade in illicit charcoal from Somalia, are limiting the funds that violent extremist groups like Al-Shabaab are using to fuel their campaigns of terror. But it is not enough for us to adopt mandates and resolutions, we must be willing to exercise the political will and take the action needed to actually preserve international peace and security.

Today, we empower United Nations peacekeeping missions with more robust mandates than ever before to protect civilians and monitor human rights. When those mandates are contested, however, we must take appropriate action to defend them. Unfortunately, the Council was silent when the Sudanese Government denied United Nations peacekeepers unhindered access to the town of Thabit, North Darfur, thereby preventing the United Nations from properly investigating possible human rights violations following allegations that Sudanese soldiers had raped more than 200 women and girls in October. Instead, the only time the peacekeepers were permitted to reach Thabit, Sudanese military and intelligence officials refused to let them interview alleged rape victims in private and, in some cases, recorded the interviews.

Ensuring respect for the work of the United Nations entails acting in good faith in accordance with the principles of the Charter. Yet notwithstanding the foundational obligations of Member States to respect sovereignty and territorial integrity, Russia today is training, arming, supporting and fighting alongside separatists who have brutally seized Ukrainian territory — a blatant violation of the Charter of the United Nations and an assault on its neighbour's sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity — one that has already cost some 5,700 lives and forced the displacement of more than 1.7 million Ukrainians.

Thirdly, in dealing with States that flout the United Nations principles, and their international obligations more generally, the United Nations must come up with more effective ways to pressure them. That includes States that brutally repress their own people, behaviour that in and of itself can threaten international peace and security. Consider the recent actions of the United Nations with respect to North Korea. In March 2013, the United Nations Human Rights Council established the Commission of Inquiry on the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, which not only thoroughly documented the regime's horrors, but also brought them into public view by holding open hearings with victims and experts. Based on the Commission's findings, the General Assembly adopted resolution 67/181, roundly condemning the regime's systematic abuses and encouraging the Security Council to consider appropriate action to ensure accountability. When the Security Council met in December to discuss North Korea's human rights crisis for the very first time (see S/PV.7353), many members, including the United States, echoed the General Assembly's call.

It is true that the regime's prison camps continue to hold between 80,000 and 120,000 people in ghastly conditions. Nonetheless, by shining a light on the unspeakable violations being perpetrated every day in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, United Nations action is helping to galvanize broader pressure on the regime to end abuses that were ignored for far too long.

The situation in North Korea reveals a fundamental lesson learned many times over since the Charter was adopted. Widespread human rights violations can themselves pose a threat to international peace and security. We must not ignore connections between the way Governments treat their own citizens and the way they interact with other States and the norms of our shared international system. North Korea, for example, has repeatedly threatened nuclear attacks against States that criticize the way it treats its own people. In Syria, violations perpetrated by the Al-Assad regime were instrumental in the dramatic rise of the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant and other terrorist groups, which are now wreaking havoc far beyond that country's borders. Moreover, the violence in Syria has led nearly 4 million people to take refuge in neighbouring countries, placing a massive and destabilizing strain on those Governments.

Whether in Syria or elsewhere in the world, when a country locks up its political opponents instead of resolving differences through dialogue, or when it attempts to silence its critics, as some Council members are doing, it both violates its Charter commitment to human rights and fundamental freedoms, and it will not bring about the stability that is so important to the lasting economic and social progress we all wish to see. Rather than locking up one's opponents, making ridiculous allegations and pointing fingers at foreign Powers, respecting human rights and fundamental freedoms, as the Charter provides, is the foundation for peace, security and prosperity.

As we strive to enhance the effectiveness of the United Nations, we must guard against attempts to manipulate the purposes and principles of the Charter in an effort to prevent the United Nations from tackling the global challenges it was designed to confront and defending the rights of individuals it was meant to champion. Yet some seek to distort the purposes and principles by asserting, for instance, that human rights violations have no relation to international peace and security, or that the sovereignty of nations precludes United Nations engagement on those issues. But as President Obama said before the General Assembly a few years ago,

> "sovereignty cannot be a shield for tyrants to commit wanton murder or an excuse for the international community to turn a blind eye" (*A/68/PV.5, p. 16*).

Sovereignty did not give the Nazis licence to massacre Jews 75 years ago. It did not give a Hutu extremist regime licence to slaughter Tutsis two decades ago. And it does not and cannot be allowed to shield Governments that commit atrocities today.

If we, the people of the United Nations, are to recommit ourselves to the purposes and principles of the Charter, we must see them as the drafters intended them: as a blueprint to unite us in advancing the safety, security and human rights of people across the world, and not as an instrument to divide us and obstruct that crucial effort — people like the Syrians in East Ghouta, more than 200 of whom have been killed in the past two weeks by bombs dropped by the Al-Assad regime; people like the democracy and human rights activists whose efforts to promote freedom of expression, association and peaceful assembly have been stifled by the growing global crackdown on civil society, with over 50 countries proposing restrictive measures on civil society efforts in just the past two years; and people like the Ukrainian children and elderly who were trapped in Debaltseve, left to cower in basements while separatists, with Russia's weapons, training and blessing, pummeled the city with rockets and mortars after having agreed to a ceasefire. If we keep such people at the heart of our efforts, we will more effectively live up to our shared responsibilities and the shared vision that the drafters embodied in the purposes and principles of the Charter.

Mr. Ybáñez (Spain) (*spoke in Spanish*): Allow me to first warmly congratulate you personally, President, on the People's Republic of China's organization of this high-level open debate. This is not a mere formality; Spain welcomes the fact that the Chinese presidency of the Council has afforded us all an opportunity to speak on an essential issue that lies at the heart of our work. We are called on to reflect together on pertinence of the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations in the light of 75 years of experience, which projects, like any human endeavour, both light and shadow.

I would also like to express our gratitude for the concept note before us (S/2015/87, annex), which is clear, positive and courageous. It constitutes a motivating guide for spreading our wings and abandoning the difficulties of daily life, and gives us the perspective necessary to turn a vital and indispensable common goal into a reality — that of shared prosperity in a safe and peaceful world. Your invitation is neither a theoretical nor an academic exercise, which would be inappropriate in this organ. It is about reaffirming the commitment of each one of us to the principles and purposes of the Charter of the United Nations with a view to creating an atmosphere conducive to this year's commemoration of its seventieth anniversary.

The simple and direct questioning of the concept note deserves a clear answer. Spain is firmly committed to the purposes and principles of the San Francisco Charter. We consider them to be as valid today as they were in 1945. The principles are the bases on which the ongoing action required to realize the purposes is built, because the purposes are not goals that, once achieved, have been overcome. Instead, they require a sustained effort to which we are all called to contribute. The purposes are a daily challenge.

The purposes and principles should be read in conjunction with the Preamble of the Charter, which, with its catalog of inspiring values that guide the actions of the United Nations, constitutes a sort of ethical heaven. The triangle composed of the Preamble, purposes and principles is an indivisible whole that has not aged over time, as would a daguerreotype, but instead has gained in resolution and validity.

The founders of the United Nations, with their first-hand experience of the ravages of war, declared themselves determined to preserve succeeding generations from that scourge. To that end, they charted a programme — a code of conduct that requires constant reaffirmation. The seventieth anniversary of the Organization is an ideal opportunity for all Member States to renew the vows proclaimed in the Preamble of the Charter and to express our commitment to its purposes and principles. Spain encourages us all to solemnly commemorate this occasion through a universal declaration that reaffirms the validity of this essential core of the Charter: the Preamble, purposes and principles.

Although the foundation of the United Nations edifice is solid, as is the land on which the United Nations is built, the world in the second decade of the twenty-first century has little do with that which arose from the ashes of the Second World War. We live in a much more mobile, complex and uncertain scenario than that which prevailed after the last World War times. The United Nations system has evolved from its origins in order to meet the challenges of a constantly changing world. It is also up to us now, one of the future generations to which the founders referred, to update the instruments that strengthen the roots, values and purposes based on Article 2 of the Charter in contemporary international society.

The 70 years that have passed were far from an upward and straight path. It is true that humankind has not been subjected to a new world war, with the consequent threat to the survival of the planet. However, the fact remains that local or regional conflicts have erupted incessantly and more frequently. Far from being satisfied, we must admit that, far more often than we would like, our efforts have been frustrated. We have not been able to prevent foretold conflict. We have not always been able to facilitate or impose the cessation of hostilities in instances where two parties in conflict have resorted to the use of arms. We have failed to consolidate fragile truces, and fires have been rekindled from the ashes of violence, engulfing countries and entire regions.

We must improve our performance in conflict prevention, and the Organization has plenty of means at its disposal to do so. The General Assembly, Security Council and Secretariat can undoubtedly establish guidelines for joint action that, respectful of the principles of the Charter, can more effectively serve the purpose of maintaining peace. Spain firmly believes in the need to strengthen the instruments of conflict prevention. The promotion of intercultural and interreligious dialogue through the Alliance of Civilizations and the King Abdullah Bin Abdulaziz International Centre for Interreligious and Intercultural Dialogue; the development of mediation mechanisms, such as that we are promoting in the Mediterranean with Morocco, assisted by other friendly countries such as Slovenia and Jordan; and the western Mediterranean water strategy we are leading with Algeria are multifaceted samples of our active participation in the field of conflict prevention and mediation. The common denominator of these initiatives is a determined effort to create effective channels and mechanisms for cooperation, understanding and tolerance, and to stop fanaticism and violence.

The maintenance of peace must be based on a system of relations among States and organizations based on legally binding rights and obligations, whose ultimate goal is the rule of law. There is no peace without respect for the law. The United Nations system has been able to gradually channel the yearnings and aspirations of the members of the international community, including smaller States. These wishes and aspirations are increasingly being reflected in a legal system that is evolving towards the realization of the rule of law at the global level, based around the cornerstone of the Charter of the United Nations as its cornerstone and with full respect for the equality among the Members of the Organization. This equality derives from the principle of sovereignty, whose legitimacy rests, in the words of Kofi Annan, in a conception of a States as "instruments at the service of their people, and not vice versa", and in an interpretation of sovereignty that is faithful to the original meaning of the word, which evokes a superior, not absolute, power. Since the adoption of the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights, United Nations Members have made progress in integrating human rights as an essential element that informs and strengthens the exercise of sovereignty.

The San Francisco Charter established the International Court of Justice and, decades later, the Rome Statute heralded the creation of the International Criminal Court. Other good news along the path of these seven decades include the institutions created and multilateral agreements signed in the field of human rights and in international humanitarian law; the gradual rise in conventional instruments of disarmament, non-proliferation and arms control; the development and codification of international law enhancing lawful security; and the progressive eradication of impunity for mass atrocities and crimes against humanity.

We can go farther still. A certain amount of utopia is necessary to make the world move forward. In this spirit, we would like to highlight that the use of the veto is one of the most significant obstacles to the practical realization of the purpose of maintaining international peace and security entrusted by the Charter primarily to the Security Council. We are aware that the veto is part of the constituent agreement that lies at the origin of the San Francisco Charter. However, rigidly preserving an arrangement that, as experience has shown, badly needs updating does not resolve the underlying problem — the lack of legitimacy of vetoes of draft resolutions seeking to remedy large-scale killings and open spaces for just and lasting peace solutions.

Given this belief, we support the French initiative proposing a code of conduct whereby the five permanent members of the Council would commit to refrain from using the veto in cases where the commission mass atrocities has been proven. We view that proposal, which has also been supported today by New Zealand and which has the advantage of not requiring amendment to the Charter, to be a substantive way of advancing towards the goal of eliminating a privilege whose abuse harms the system and weakens its authority. In that regard, I would like to associate myself with the statement to be delivered on behalf of the European Union, in particular with regard to what it has to say about the importance of respect by all members of the United Nations of the principle of territorial integrity, an idea which is taken up in the concept note issued by the presidency.

In conclusion, 2015 can and must be an historic year in the life of the Organization. The new development agenda, the climate conference and the review of peacekeeping operations are milestones that demand responsibility and courage. In this context, the adoption of a universal declaration renewing the commitment of its Members to the values, purposes and principles of the San Francisco Charter on the occasion of the seventieth anniversary of its entry into force would serve to breathe new life into a body that has aged significantly and that needs to drink again from the fountain that gave it reason for being.

If the twenty-first century is to be better for humankind than the twentieth, it will depend on the wisdom and will we can muster. We want and need to build, on the basis of the solid foundations of the Charter, a future that is more democratic and better protects human rights under a more robust and effective international legal order. This is an arduous and inspiring task, which we owe it to our children and future generations to achieve. Spain can be counted upon in this endeavour.

The President (*spoke in Chinese*): I now give the floor to the Secretary of State for External Relations of Angola.

Mr. Augusto (Angola): At the outset, I would like to thank the Chinese presidency of the Security Council for having organized this important debate.

This year marks the seventieth anniversary of the founding of the United Nations, the end of the Second World War and the victory of our peoples over fascism.

The twentieth century was marked by two World Wars that brought untold sorrow to humankind. The worst of human nature surfaced in utmost brutality, in a time in which intellectual thinking, cultural refinement and scientific progress had achieved unparalleled heights in the history of humankind, leading to the establishment of a new type of relations among the nations and peoples of the world. The United Nations was the response to the grim realities of the past. The Charter embodies the international community's conception of this new type of relations, including the end of colonialism and the right of all peoples to self-determination and independence.

The Preamble of the Charter outlines how the peoples of the world should live in peace and harmony. It makes far-reaching declarations of purpose by embodying a comprehensive programme for maintaining international peace and security. The peoples of the United Nations expressed their determination to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war — a declaration that, unfortunately, remains far from fulfilled. The United Nations has nonetheless played a crucial role in the maintenance of international peace and security, by promoting friendlier relations among nations and cooperation in solving international problems, and in codifying international law as the basis for the peaceful coexistence of States — an objective of international relations in which the United Nations has attained remarkable success.

In today's world, as armed conflicts proliferate — mainly intra-State conflicts, due to political, social or economic exclusion, to religious, racial or tribal intolerance, or to sheer disrespect for basic human rights — the United Nations is faced with the necessity to adapt its strategies for the maintenance of peace and security. In fact, we say with regret that in the 70 years of its existence, the United Nations has not been able to realize the vision of its founders — to save future generations from the scourge of war — since war and violent conflict continue to be part of the daily lives of millions of people.

The peoples of the United Nations reaffirmed faith in fundamental human rights, in the dignity and worth of the human person, in the equal rights of men and women and of nations, large and small. Those are fundamental precepts for maintaining international peace and security. Since the foundation of the United Nations, and under its impulse, the world has witnessed outstanding advancement in this respect. Many countries have made remarkable civilizational progress in promoting the value and dignity of the human person and conferred equal rights to men and women, while processes of national emancipation from colonialism and regional integration have tended to harmonize relations between large and small nations.

The United Nations remains the main rampart for the protection and promotion of human rights. Its work promoting respect for human rights and the codification of international human rights law is a significant contribution to this important fight for human dignity and, consequently, for the maintenance of international peace and security.

Another issue on which the peoples of the United Nations put special emphasis is establishing conditions for maintaining justice and respect for obligations arising from treaties and other sources of international law. The Charter established the principles that make up the foundation of contemporary international relations: respect for State sovereignty and territorial integrity, peaceful settlement of international disputes, and non-interference in other countries' internal affairs. However, these principles, which are enshrined in the Charter, are violated time and again, with countries continuing to interfere in other countries' internal affairs, violating the Charter and thus threatening international peace and security.

The promotion of social progress and better standards of living in larger freedom are fundamental instances determined by the peoples of the United Nations. Indeed, endemic poverty, social and economic exclusion and the denial of fundamental freedoms constitute today an explosive cocktail and a real threat to peace and security. Development, well-being and democracy are pillars of peaceful and inclusive societies. The nexus of peace and development is central in the building of inclusive and peaceful societies, which are crucial elements for the maintenance of peace and security.

The peoples of the United Nations also decided to practice tolerance and live together in peace with one another as good neighbours. However, of all the proclamations contained in the Charter, this one has met with the most failure. In current conflicts — intra-State and asymmetric — intolerance and hatred are directed against others for being different, against the neighbour because of differences of race, tribe, clan, religion or even gender. Intolerance has become a deadly threat to peace. This feature is present even in affluent, democratic and participative societies, which have great difficulties in tolerating and integrating communities of different origin. That gives rise to dangerous situations that are real threats to peace. Terrorism today — the most egregious form of intolerance — together with the phenomenon of foreign terrorist fighters should be a wake-up call to us all as to how we manage the integration of communities of foreign origin.

The peoples of the United Nations also pledged to unite in the maintenance of international peace and security, thus giving the Organization the necessary leverage to act in crisis situations that represent threats to peace and security by conferring on the Security Council the primary responsibility to act on their behalf in carrying out its duties. This demonstration of confidence in the Security Council means that its decisions must not be based on partisan or private interests, but correspond to the real objective of attaining peace based on consensus and consent by the international community. It follows that the Security Council is accountable to the entire United Nations membership, which is a commitment that, in our view, calls for a reform of the Council to make it more democratic in its methods of work and more representative in its membership. It also calls for reform of the veto power and for the review of the Council's relationship with the wider United Nations membership.

The peoples of the United Nations demand that armed force not be used save in the common interest, which is a proclamation that barely corresponds to the realities of contemporary international life. Too often, threats of the use of force, actual use of military force out of common interest and unilateral military action based on inaccurate assessments and miscalculations account for wider consequences for many countries and the international community at large. Member States should accept, apply and adhere to the United Nations principles and operational methods to ensure that force should be used only in situations of imminent threat to peace and after all options for peaceful settlement have been exhausted.

Finally, in their proclamation, the peoples of the United Nation pledged to employ the international machinery for the promotion of the economic and social advancement of all peoples. The contemporary and multifaceted world in which we live calls for a multilateral approach and greater unity of purpose among Member States to tackle global challenges. This is the cornerstone for ensuring lasting peace and prosperity for present and future generations.

As a peace-loving country and member of the Security Council, Angola greatly values the action of the United Nations. In this connection, it is important to mention the decisive role played by the Security Council in condemning and isolating the apartheid regime, which was a major source of conflict in Southern African and a serious threat to international peace and security. Through its actions, the Security Council significantly contributed to the fight for justice, equality and social progress of the peoples of Southern Africa and to their struggle to put an end to apartheid and colonialism in the region.

Forty years ago, Angola was in the front line in applying Security Council resolutions concerning the struggle against apartheid and for the emancipation of the peoples of Southern Africa. It paid a very high price in terms of loss of human lives and material destruction, having had to face the apartheid regime's military aggression for many years. We value the important contribution by the international community and the pivotal role of the Security Council in that process.

We commend the vital role the United Nations plays in ensuring that Member States uphold the principles and purposes stipulated in the Charter. The United Nations has our full support in the work of promoting cooperation in maintaining international peace and security and in being the central forum for harmonizing the actions of nations in the attainment of our common goals.

In conclusion, we wish once again to commend the initiative of the presidency of China in giving us this opportunity to discuss and take stock of our action in the Council at this time when the international community is facing challenges that are comparable to those it faced 70 years ago. We therefore wish to reflect on and seek new ways to deal with those growing threats.

Sir Mark Lyall Grant (United Kingdom): I thank you, Sir, for convening today's debate and for chairing it in person. I also thank the Secretary-General for his thoughtful briefing this morning.

Seventy years ago, the Charter of the United Nations established the three founding pillars of the United Nations system: peace and security, human rights, and development. Since 1945, these pillars have provided a framework for the Security Council to tackle challenges our predecessors could never have foreseen.

But these three pillars remain relevant today, and that is testament to their enduring value.

Inter-State conflict remains a threat to international peace and security, as Russia's illegal annexation of Crimea and destabilization of eastern Ukraine graphically demonstrate. But threats are no longer confined to disputes between nation States, as the United Nations founders first conceived. These threats now exist irrespective of borders, in deep-rooted ethnic and religious divisions, in violent non-State actors and terrorists, and where Governments fail to abide by the rule of law and disregard the human rights of their citizens. These threats now undermine the sovereignty of States in a way we have never seen before. If left unaddressed, legitimate grievances can quickly turn to violence and disorder. We must recognize that preventive action and support from this Council can bolster sovereignty by helping States to address these issues. We must utilize all the tools at our disposal in order to do so.

Peacekeeping is one such tool, and is a strong example of the flexibility of the Council in implementing the Charter of the United Nations. There is no mention of peacekeeping in the Charter, and yet today there are over 120,000 military and civilian personnel keeping the peace and protecting civilians on four continents, many in partnership with the African Union or the European Union. This year, we have the opportunity to further improve United Nations peacekeeping. The peace operations review will consider more effective protection of civilians, including better prevention of sexual violence. On this fifteenth anniversary year of the adoption of resolution 1325 (2000), on women and peace and security, we must recognize the disproportionate effect of conflict on women and the important role of women in peacebuilding.

Over the past 70 years, as the Secretary-General spelled out, respect for human rights has become increasingly central to maintaining international peace and security. Last year, resolution 2171 (2014) affirmed that patterns of human rights violations and abuses can act as early warning signs for impending or escalating conflicts. As we look ahead to the next 70 years, we must embrace a reconception of international security that recognizes that human rights are integral to the Council's work on conflict prevention. The consequences of not doing so can be seen in Aleppo, in the camps of Yarmouk and in the rise of the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant. When individual States can no longer ensure respect for human rights, they put their countries at risk of conflict and international peace and security are threatened. In these instances, the Charter is clear about the Council's responsibility to intervene in matters that would normally fall within domestic jurisdiction.

Ending impunity for human rights violations and abuses is also paramount to help reconcile communities and aid the settlement of disputes. No one can be above the law, and the International Criminal Court and the International Court of Justice have important roles to play. The United Kingdom has long accepted the compulsory jurisdiction of the International Court of Justice, but is the only permanent member of the Council to have continuously done so. We urge others to follow suit.

We have an historic opportunity this year to tackle the causes of poverty through the post-2015 development framework. We support an agenda that will leave no one behind and will respect the equal rights of men and women. Enshrining those principles in the framework can only further our work on human rights and, in the long-term, ensure fair and inclusive economies and societies.

The United Kingdom is proud to be investing 0.7 per cent of our gross national income in overseas aid. We are the only Group of 20 country to do so. As my Prime Minister David Cameron has said, this aid fosters a golden thread of development that allows countries to prosper and to avoid conflict. It helps create inclusive institutions, open societies and economies, and maintain the rule of law. The perils of not doing so can be seen in the events of the Arab Spring, the aftermath of which still undermines international peace and security today.

Let me conclude with the words of former Secretary-General Kofi Annan. He argued that

> "we will not enjoy development without security, we will not enjoy security without development, and we will not enjoy either without respect for human rights" (*A/59/2005, para. 17*).

The United Kingdom fully endorses those words. The three pillars of the Charter are greater than the sum of their individual parts. They support each other, and success in one fosters success in the others. We cannot pick and choose which pillars the Council supports, nor can we focus on to the detriment of the others. To do so would be to ignore the lessons of the past 70 years and to invite future conflict.

Mrs. Kawar (Jordan) (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset, I should like to welcome you, Sir, and to thank China for convening this important meeting on maintaining international peace and security and the commitment to the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations . I also thank the Secretary-General for his briefing on the issue.

Since the adoption of the Charter nearly 70 years ago, the United Nations has played a major role in steering multilateral diplomacy and shaping results in various aspects of inter-State relations, not to mention its role in focusing the debate on major issues related to human development. One could easily say that, to a large extent and in spite of numerous challenges and mixed results along the years, the United Nations has succeeded in living up to the principles and purposes for which it was created, as embodied in the Charter. The world would not be the same without the United Nations.

The real challenge, however, is now ahead of us, for the threats facing us are ever growing and ever changing in nature. They necessitate new answers. The world of today is not what it was after the Second World War. It is still plagued by the scourges of wars and their aftermath, and by internal armed conflict; by the existence of 50 million refugees and displaced persons; by the fact that 20 per cent of the Earth's population living in poverty; and by lack of proper health care, education and sanitation for large segments of the world's population. The list is long and the picture is grim. We could add the re-emergence of a new form of terrorism that is based on warped ideologies and the brainwashing of persons to commit the most heinous crimes, while resorting to illegal and organized crime of all kinds.

Is this the world the founders imagined when the seeds of the United Nations were planted 70 years ago? Violations of international law, including normative rules, are committed on a daily basis. Mass atrocities and grave violations of international humanitarian law and human rights are committed every day. The question we need to ask is: How can the principles and purposes of the Charter of the United Nations still be pertinent to today's' challenges, and should they continue to be the bases for preserving our peace and security and our common human values?

The answer is that if we deviate from the core principles and goals of the Charter, the world will be more prone to conflict and war than it is now, and we will risk losing the achievements of humankind at all levels. This is hard to imagine but very true. Our ability to fight and contain threats to peace and stability will also be compromised. We should keep this in mind when we debate the value of the United Nations and its principles and purposes. It is important to stress that the interpretation and implementation of those principles and purposes should take into account the current trends in international relations and the developing nature of threats and changes faced by the international community.

Sovereignty, independence, territorial integrity and non-interference should always be respected, and the United Nations and its Members and organs should work to maintain their integrity. In the same vein, the rights, dignity and prosperity of the human individual should be our goal, too. The Charter of the United Nations indeed starts with "We the peoples of the United Nations", and its Preamble makes it clear that one object and purpose of the Charter is ensuring respect for fundamental human rights, the dignity and worth of the human person, and the equality of men and woman and of nations. The rights of States and persons should not be mutually exclusive, and the United Nations should strive to respect that principle.

However, it is important to state that the organs of the United Nations have the duty to react when there are grave violations of human rights and humanitarian law. Sovereignty and non-interference should not shield States or their officials who commit atrocities against their own and other peoples from action on the part of the Organization based on the Charter's provisions. That is where the Security Council has to play a pivotal role, and where it has failed to do so at times. The Council has in many situations not taken the much-needed action whereby millions of lives could have been saved — whether it was the slow and timid response to the genocide in Rwanda and the atrocities in the Balkans or the inaction in the face of the savagery in Syria or, not least, the tolerance towards the continuous crimes being committed against the people of Palestine.

Democracy in international decision-making relating to peace and security is crucial, and I thank China for bringing that up in its concept note (S/2015/87, annex). In the Security Council we need to try to ensure that the common interests of the international community prevail over the individual interests of its members. The current Council structure has to be adapted in order to ensure that the democratic vision and the functions of the Council are fulfilled in accordance with the letter and the spirit of the Charter. If we in the Council continue our current methods of dealing with crises, especially those that involve mass atrocities, we risk losing our exclusive and leading role in the maintenance of international peace and security.

Furthermore, Chapter VII of the Charter has been resorted to quite often in the past 20 years, especially to impose sanctions. The method by which such sanctions are adopted is the least transparent and democratic — quite often set in place in less than a week or two and without proper consultation with all the relevant actors and without regard for their long-term consequences. We now face a situation in which respect for sanctions regimes is being undermined due to their voluminous nature, as States are either unable and unwilling to implement them or part thereof. That is just one aspect of the imbalance in the imposition of enforcement measures, but a crucial one, especially in the light of the emerging asymmetrical threats the world faces from global terrorism and non-State actors. An effective response means a carefully studied process where all stakeholders are involved before measures are taken, including under Chapter VII. It is also important that stakeholders study the root causes of the conflict and the best way to contain or prevent it, and not deal with all conflicts with one mould and with the same tools.

Respect for international law and the rule of law remains a crucial element in the maintenance of international peace and security. Accountability needs to be reinforced, and the rule of law in international relations need to be treated as constant and not as relative. Unfortunately, States are led by their own, not common, interests. That will not change. But we can change the prevailing belief that the application of the law should be based on economic or military power. The United Nations and its organs therefore have to work towards accountability for international law violations, increasing the visibility for such violations and promoting a culture of checks and balances.

In the same vein, the United Nations should work actively with States to promote international law, and not just by hosting ceremonial treaty events, acting as depositories of treaties and endlessly debating legal issues in the Sixth Committee without taking any action. The Security Council also has a role to play in promoting the law. It should start with itself, by highlighting that any action it takes is based on international law and not just its determination that a situation may endanger or threaten peace and security. It also has to promote the peaceful settlement of disputes, especially through judicial and arbitration processes. Chapter VI has been rarely used in the past decades, and a change in that approach, along with increased cooperation with judicial and investigative bodies, will send a message that the Council indeed considers the rule of law as paramount.

Mr. Mangaral (Chad) (*spoke in French*): I should like to commend the Chinese presidency of the Security Council for the month of February for having organized this debate. I also welcome Mr. Wang Yi, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the People's Republic of China, as well as all the other Ministers present here today. I thank as well the Secretary-General for his important briefing.

When the States victorious in the Second World War met in San Francisco in 1945 to establish the United Nations, their hope was to envision a peaceful, just and egalitarian world. In spite the shortcomings at the time the Charter of the United Nations was conceived and the changing realities of our world, the hopes of that time remain alive today. Although the vision set out in 1945 for a future world may diverge from current reality, as you, Mr. President, pointed out in your concept note (S/2015/87/annex), our world today is still characterized by a trend towards multipolarity, economic globalization and the desire for peace and security. As several speakers have indicated, this new reality undoubtedly requires a new look into the strategies undertaken by the United Nations.

The maintenance of international peace and security nevertheless reamains the primary objective of the United Nations and the international community, especially given the great suffering being endured by civilians owing to the proliferation and intensity of conflicts as well as the new terrorist momentum. This situation should more than ever lead the international community to commit to the purposes and principles of the Charter with renewed importance. In that regard, the Millennium Declaration, adopted by Heads of State and Government in 2000, recognizes in the purposes and principles of the United Nations not just a universal value, but rather an eternal one. However, while the aspiration to peace remains the main concern in the world, today as it was yesterday, achieving it has become more difficult with the passing of 70 years since the establishment of the Organization. In that regard, we are quite justified in questioning the effectiveness of the Security Council in tackling these issues. However, the reasons for this are well known— and they are not irreversible.

It is worth recalling, if only to lament the fact, that in today's world, characterized by inequality and underdevelopment, injustice, disregard for human rights and a lack of respect for the rule of law, at both the national and international levels, one cannot hope for peace that is in keeping with our ideals. All of our countries, developing and developed, all share responsibility for this situation. The sometimes abusive recourse to force and the right of the veto at the Security Council diminishes to zero the efforts of the Council and prevents it from achieving its objectives. The world still remembers the failures of the Organization in resolving the Palestinian issue and in preventing and managing mass crimes, such as in Rwanda, Bosnia and Herzegovina and other more recent examples, such as in Syria.

Today we can all agree that it is as a result of United Nations action that the world has not experienced another major conflict. Of course, it should be possible to do better by pooling our efforts and to obtain from the Security Council a more cohesive and comprehensive strategy to harness the strengths of its members to restore peace in the world, rather than acting in a case-by-case manner. Furthermore, in line with the Charter, the Council should seek peace and security first and foremost through the peaceful settlement of disputes, as well as through preventive action. Former Secretary-General Boutros-Ghali already set out the outlines for such action. It is the ability to work to that end that will open up a path towards implementing reform of this body.

Given the nature of current regional conflicts, the Security Council should be able to better strengthen cooperation with regional and subregional organizations, above and beyond the periodic exercise in consultation, so as to lend the necessary financial and technical support to assist them in facing the situations they face.

The primary objective of the United Nations is to maintain international peace and security. That has not yet been achieved, but the principles upon which it is based have experienced various transformations and changes, becoming today fundamental rules for peaceful relations among States. The principles of non-interference in domestic affairs, the non-use of force in international affairs, the sovereign equality of States, respect for territorial integrity and for human rights and the rights of people to decide on their own future are all enshrined in the 1970 Declaration on Principles of International Law concerning Friendly Relations and Cooperation among States in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations, which today serves to strengthen their universal nature.

Furthermore, thanks to the international community's firm support for peoples' right to self-determination, the United Nations has served as the framework for all new States' independence. Despite the tendency of certain States to interfere in the domestic affairs of others, the use of force is no longer a preferred approach to resolving disputes in international relations. The United Nations, which remains an unparalleled forum for multilateral development cooperation, is also striving, together with regional subregional organizations and through its Secretariat, to offer a better framework for mediation and contributes greatly to developing international justice processes for the peaceful resolution of various disputes around the world.

In conclusion, no State today can question the legitimacy of the purposes and principles of the United Nations. They have become universal, and their standing is such that the entire international community has supported them, as confirmed recently at the 2005 World Summit of Heads of State and Government. Finally, as far as my country is concerned, we will remain true to the ideals of the Organization. We would like to reiterate our commitment to respect for the Charter and the faithful implementation of international law for a peaceful, just and equitable world.

Mr. Barros Melet (Chile) (*spoke in Spanish*): At the outset, we would like to thank the Minister for Foreign Affairs of the People's Republic of China for having organized this debate. We also thank the Secretary-General for his statement.

The purposes and principles enshrined in the United Nations Charter establish the fundamental basis for peaceful coexistence among States. They are the backbone of the political and legal values that structure the international system, and we must continue to guide cooperation among States on these bases — even more so in a diverse and asymmetrical world such as ours.

In the light of the upcoming commemoration of the seventieth anniversary of the adoption of the Charter, we would like to state that its purposes and principles are assets to the international community and should guarantee the universal application of the rule of law and global governance. Those principles will form a comprehensive corpus that is customary, universal, non-derogable and as a whole enforceable, as recognized in General Assembly resolution 2625 (XXV) and international jurisprudence. Under these principles, selectivity is not possible.

Against that backdrop, international law, which has undergone significant developments, demands adherence to the integrity of the founding principles of the Charter, which must be upheld even in the face of new realities, when the goal of helping to establish stability, peace and security is stake. Consequently, even when employed in the service of necessary evolution, such legal principles as the sovereign equality of States, good faith compliance with international obligations, States' territorial integrity and political independence, the peaceful settlement of disputes and the non-use of force should not be affected. The constitutional nature of that set of principles should not be relativized, since it would affect the very essence of stability and coexistence among States.

The Charter is an instrument for peace, security and development, and respecting it involves recognizing that the dignity and welfare of people are an integral part of respect for fundamental rights. Our country firmly believes that systematic human rights violations and crimes against humanity, including ethnic cleansing, genocide and war crimes, call for the international community to express legitimate concern, as it has the duty to give effect to the instruments and mechanisms in place. In that context, its is with a sense of responsibility that we reiterate that the principle of non-intervention cannot be a barrier that prevents the international community from ruling on situations where fundamental rights are violated.

In an interconnected world, where ethical development is crucial to addressing pressing issues of global policy, we cannot remain indifferent to acts that are repugnant to human consciousness, which daily challenge Governments and international institutions to act. The responsibility to protect is a concept that has legitimacy and, as such, should be incorporated into the international law and institutions with which the international community has been endowed. The Security Council has recognized that in successive resolutions, including resolutions 2150 (2014) and 2171 (2014). Through those resolutions, the Council has emphasized that the responsibility to protect can be instrumental in preventing and combating serious international crimes such as genocide.

The Council must take all the steps necessary to facilitate the search, in accordance with international law, for frameworks through which to prevent conflicts and act on them in a legitimate and appropriate manner when appropriate. Today we recognize that international law has evolved from being aimed at coexistence to being aimed at cooperation, as evidenced in the obligations and instruments on those subjects. We must rise to the challenge of enhancing those elements that enable us to continue to build an international regulatory structure that adequately reflects the purposes and principles of the Charter in our current circumstances.

In that context, the policy and legal imperative that the United Nations, and in particular the Council, must continue to promote is key. The Council, taking into full consideration the role of regional organizations under Chapter VIII, must act in a manner consistent with those purposes and principles.

A, analysis of the root or immediate causes of the destabilizing processes and crises that today seriously threaten the maintenance of international peace and security cannot therefore depart from the teaching of the universal principles expressed in the Charter. Neither terrorism, arms proliferation, internal armed conflicts nor piracy, among other threats, may serve to justify a departure from the founding treaty of the system.

I wish to conclude my statement by recalling that the Council has recognized that the three pillars of the United Nations — peace and security, human rights, and development — are closely interrelated and mutually reinforcing. Chile has promoted inclusive development as a transformative mechanism for dealing with the underlying causes of conflict, and we find strength in our conviction that it is not possible to separate the concept of the precepts and principles of the Charter and international law, which must prevail as the structural political and legal values of the global order.

Mr. Delattre (France) (*spoke in French*): I would like to thank the Chinese presidency for organizing a debate on a topic that is dear to us and which seeks to engage all our energy. Your presence helps us in that respect, Mr. Minister, and while the French Minister for Foreign Affairs, Mr. Laurent Fabius, was not able to attend this debate, I know he welcomes your initiative, which is a very useful one in the lead-up to the seventieth anniversary of the United Nations.

Some 70 years ago, at the end of the Second World War, the San Francisco Conference ended with the enthusiastic adoption and signing of the Charter. That moment was celebrated as a key moment in history. When we read that text together, let us not forget that even its words are imbued with the trauma of the war and its atrocities. The United Nations is determined to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war, as stated in the preamble to the Charter, and its primary goal, as reaffirmed in Article 1, is the maintenance peace and international security.

I wish to respond to the invitation of the Chinese presidency and to state here, as President Hollande did on 25 September 2012, that to be a permanent member of the Council means "making the commitment to take action to promote peace in the world" (*A/67/PV.6, p. 44*).

The maintenance of international peace and security is not the only goal affirmed by the Charter of the United Nations. Its Article 1 also sets out two essential pillars of the Organization, namely, the development of friendly relations between peoples and international cooperation in solving international problems by promoting and encouraging respect for human rights and for fundamental freedoms for all.

France identifies strongly itself with these values, and I should like to recall that on 31 January 1964, as we were forging bilateral relations between France and China, General de Gaulle stated that, most importantly, it is possible that in the context of the immensity of global processes, it is by promoting relations among peoples that we will serve the cause of humankind, that is to say, the cause of wisdom, progress and peace.

On its path towards lasting peace, the international community bases itself on points of reference that include its values, one Organization and respect for the principles of international law.

The note submitted by the Chinese presidency (S/2015/87, annex) rightly stresses the need for respect for international law and the importance of the rule of law. These collective standards are aimed at constraining force in accordance with the principles set out in Article 2 of the Charter. It is essential to do everything possible to settle disputes by peaceful means, and France underlines in this regard the key role of the International Court of Justice in the strengthening of the international rule of law and recognizes the contribution it has made through its many advisory opinions. Through its work, it helps us understand that the rule of law cannot be applied in a vacuum but must be interpreted in the light of the realities of the international community in order to remain fruitful.

It is this living practice that has allowed the Charter to remain relevant. It shows that the United Nations has been able to adapt to changes throughout the world that have given rise to new challenges and new crises. An example here is the indispensable tool of peacekeeping operations, initially not provided for by the Charter. However, now we have more than 120,000 personnel members, as part of 16 operations, working daily for the maintenance of peace. France fully contributes to this effort, with 7,800 French soldiers engaged in peacekeeping operations. Our meeting today is also an opportunity to pay tribute to them and to restate our concerns regarding their security in the performance of their duties.

Increasingly, regional organizations, whose contributions the Charter anticipated in its Chapter VIII, play a pivotal role in collective security. France, as a member of the European Union, recognizes their value and welcomes the decisive role played by the African Union in crisis resolution in Africa.

The maintenance of international peace and security has become a more complex undertaking in increasingly fragmented and unequal societies, at a time when globalization allows terrorism to claim more victims and inflict more suffering, ignoring borders and destabilizing entire States. Upon the seventieth anniversary, we will not be able to forget the Syrian tragedy and its more than 220,000 victims, whose memory cries out for justice, and many other mass atrocities.

We are facing unprecedented challenges. Mass crimes offend the global conscience and the memory of the sentiments that inspired the drafting of the Charter. It is when our responsibility to protect civilians fails that we the peoples of the United Nations are tested. It is in the face of such tragic failures in terms of collective security that France emphasizes the role of the International Criminal Court in ensuring that the victims of mass atrocities, not satisfied solely with confronting their past, can help us to build a better future.

But France also wishes to help prevent such tragedies. Without waiting for Charter reform, France proposed a restriction on the use of the veto in the Security Council in case of mass atrocities, which would represent a major step. It is our duty to demonstrate the extent to which a permanent seat in the Council is a responsibility rather than a privilege or a manifestation of some longing for status.

As set out in Article 24 of the Charter, the Security Council, in discharging its primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security, must act in conformity with the purposes and principles of the United Nations. Be that as it may, France remains convinced that the best possible protection against conflicts will remain economic and harmonious development and respect for human rights. The Council itself has repeatedly recognized that creating the most favourable conditions possible in all areas of the international arena in itself ensures and contributes to the maintenance of international peace.

Let us not forget that, despite all the tragic events that have taken place, considerable progress has been achieved in the areas of education and health, for example. Nor can we forget the efforts undertaken under the auspices of the United Nations to protect our planet. The year 2015 will be marked by a major event to be held in Paris at the initiative of France: the twenty-first Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, which is to lead to an ambitious global agreement to protect our climate. Let us also recall the universal acceptance of the Geneva Conventions last year to mark their 150th anniversary, as they create the conditions for peace for succeeding generations.

Values and respect for the rule of law — here it behoves me to speak of our Organization, which has been able to reform itself in the past. France actively backs Security Council reform, as recent crises have made more pressing the need to make the Organization more effective and more representative of global balances, so as to fully discharge its mission of the maintenance of international peace and security.

Recent crises have shown just how essential the United Nations and its founding text remain. I thank you, Mr. President, for having allowed us to reaffirm our common commitment at a time when our Organization is faced with challenges that only the cooperation that you have called for can address.

The President (*spoke in Chinese*): I wish to remind all speakers to limit their statements to no more than four minutes in order to enable the Council to carry out its work expeditiously. Delegations with lengthy statements are kindly requested to circulate the text in writing and to deliver a condensed version when speaking in the Chamber. I would like to appeal to speakers to deliver their statements at a normal speed so that interpretation may be provided properly.

I wish also to inform all concerned that we will be carrying on this open debate right through the lunch hour, as we have a very large number of speakers.

I now give the floor to the First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Serbia.

Mr. Dačić (Serbia): It is my great honour and gives me great satisfaction to take part today in this very important open debate, initiated and organized by China as President of the Security Council. I take this opportunity to thank China and you personally, Mr. Foreign Minister, for making it possible for us, in a year when we are marking 70 years since the adoption of the Charter of the United Nations, to reconsider once again and recommit and rededicate ourselves to the respect and safeguarding of its principles.

The purposes and principles of the United Nations, as enshrined in the Charter, continue to be just as valid and important today as they were at the time of the Charter's adoption. The expectations of saving the world from the scourge of war, respecting the dignity of each and every human person and ensuring justice at all levels are not less now than they were 70 years ago.

We firmly believe that these goals can be achieved only through strengthening international cooperation in all fields, based on the principles of the sovereign equality of States; refraining from the use of force; non-interference in the internal affairs of States; respect for territorial integrity and the pacific settlement of disputes, and through mutual respect and the honouring of differences.

I take this opportunity to reiterate, on behalf of the Republic of Serbia, its commitment to the Charter of the United Nations and the Declaration on Principles of International Law concerning Friendly Relations and Cooperation among States in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations. The principles of the Charter of the United Nations are the jus cogens of contemporary international public law, and their full implementation is a precondition for the rule of law. The Republic of Serbia strongly supports strengthening the role of the United Nations in maintaining peace and security and respect for international law. The principal organs of the United Nations can execute their basic functions effectively only if they are carried out to the benefit and on behalf of all Member States; they can be effective only if decisions are made in harmony with the principles of the Charter, and specifically those of territorial integrity and non-interference in States' internal affairs. The Republic of Serbia supports the efforts being made to assess the work of all the organs and bodies of the United Nations and find ways and possibilities for improving them, especially the Security Council's work and effectiveness in maintaining international peace and security and finding a unanimous response to the most complex security challenges and threats we face.

As Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon has pointed out on a number of occasions, the seventieth anniversary of the founding of the United Nations is a historic chance for all Member States to contribute to fulfilling our common goal — making the world better, more developed and more just. In that regard, I would like to reiterate the main principles that guide the Republic of Serbia in its foreign policy. They are the safeguarding of the international multilateral world through respect for international law and the rule of law; the primacy of the peaceful settlement of disputes through dialogue; and the achievement of greater mutual respect and understanding among peoples.

We also honour those principles in our current position as Chairperson-in-Office of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE). In that capacity, I would like to point out today that the partnership between the OSCE and the United Nations is vital to the maintenance of long-term peace and security in the geographical space between Vancouver and Vladivostok. Cooperating with the United Nations enables the OSCE to make progress in dealing with both existing and emerging challenges. That approach is firmly grounded in the OSCE's 1999 Platform for Co-operative Security and the principles reaffirmed in its 2010 Astana Commemorative Declaration. As security challenges continue to evolve, the nature of OSCE cooperation with the United Nations must evolve as well, becoming more pragmatic and action-oriented. Especially in times of economic hardship, enhancing synergies and finding new ways of working together that capitalize on the relative strengths of both organizations are critical. Effective, pragmatic cooperation that builds on the respective mandates and strengths of the United Nations and the OSCE is a key objective of the OSCE's proactive approach.

The sole road to peace and prosperity leads through mutual cooperation, respect and honour, a convincing example of which we have been embarked on since the difficult and challenging years of the 1990s and, more recently, in Kosovo and Metohija. Tolerance of every kind, especially religious tolerance, is key to overcoming the increasingly ruthless problems that today's world regrettably faces. In my view, respect for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of each and every State lies at the core of respect for international law and the rule of law, and the solution to any crisis is not military intervention but dialogue alone. A sovereign State cannot emerge by cancelling the existence and sovereignty of another. The right of a country's citizens to security, or indeed any of their rights, should never be realized by violating the fundamental rights of others.

We strongly support the position of China as President of the Security Council that we should continue to work as a matter of priority on promoting peaceful ways of settling disputes, as provided for in Chapter VI of the Charter of the United Nations. We believe that coercive measures should be used only as a last resort and only in cases when international peace and security are genuinely threatened or breached. The dialogue being conducted right now between Belgrade and Pristina with the facilitation of the European Union demonstrates in the best possible way our resolve and full commitment to normalizing relations and achieving a lasting and sustainable political solution for Kosovo and Metohija.

Unfortunately, crises are multiplying around the world, as is the number of people in need of help. We should therefore all feel called on to make the United Nations stronger and more efficient, primarily through contributions by all its individual Members. The Republic of Serbia is proud of its leadership position in South-Eastern Europe and of the fact that it ranks seventh in Europe based on its participation in and contribution to United Nations missions. As representative of a country that has peacekeepers deployed in eight United Nations missions, I would like to emphasize that the security of the crafters and implementers of global peace must be one of our priorities.

At the time when the United Nations was taking shape, ignorant of future threats and challenges, the world was full of hope that the wounds of two world wars would heal. We have inherited what has come to pass over those 70 years and see it as a guideline and impetus in our endeavour to ensure that history, in its darkest form, is not repeated. In order to uphold the ideals that have guided us all these years, each and every one of us should invest our best efforts to bring about a better world than the one we have inherited. To that end, we firmly believe in the future of the United Nations and the historic role and mission of proactive multilateralism.

The President (*spoke in Chinese*): I now give the floor to the representative of Ukraine.

Mr. Klimkin (Ukraine): I thank you, Mr. President, for your timely initiative in holding today's debate.

Ukraine aligns itself with the statement to be delivered later by the observer of the European Union. At the same time, I would also like to make a statement in my national capacity.

This year we mark the seventieth anniversary of the end of the Second World War and of the founding Member States' signing of the Charter of the United Nations, in their quest to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war. To that end, they set out clear purposes and principles that for 70 years have remained a cornerstone of international relations. Remarkably, it was the Ukrainian representative who led the committee that worked out that crucial part of the Charter so long ago in 1945. Seventy years later, the world order based on the noble purposes and comprehensive principles of the United Nations Charter is under major attack.

The Russian Federation has blatantly violated the sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity of Ukraine. It has used every possible means ranging from interference in Ukraine's internal affairs to direct military aggression and partial occupation of Ukrainian sovereign territory, and from political and economic coercion to a massive propaganda assault. It is not an exaggeration to say that Russia has unleashed a full-scale hybrid war on Ukraine. It is horrifying that such flagrant violations have been committed by a permanent member of the Security Council, which bears a special responsibility for maintaining international peace and security. Russia ignores the provisions of the Charter of the United Nations and does not respect its political and legal obligations emanating from other international agreements, including the Budapest Memorandum on Security Assurances to Ukraine. To justify its actions, it hides behind barefaced misinterpretations of the relevant documents and its related commitments.

As we prepare to mark the anniversary of the founding of the United Nations and its principles, we must do everything possible to ensure that the Organization remains a key player in maintaining international peace and security. To that end, three actions are necessary.

First, we must make all possible efforts to uphold the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations. It is essential to reaffirm their universal and unconditional validity as a basis for peaceful relations. Secondly, we must elaborate mechanisms to verify compliance with the United Nations principles against clear benchmarks. It is unacceptable to see gross violations masterfully misinterpreted, concealed or merely denied, and thereby ignored. Historically, many hopes have rested on the bona fide adherence of Member States to the rules. Yet an old diplomatic adage, "Trust, but verify", has at times proved especially fitting. Thirdly, we must ensure that States that violate United Nations principles are brought to justice. The concept of international responsibility should be reinforced with a clear set of sanctions on the infringers. It is the only way to restore trust and order in the world.

It is clear that reform of the United Nations is absolutely necessary to address its limitations. If the Organization had been upgraded, Ukraine would not have to pay a blood tribute now. However, the reform process will take time, whereas the drastic situation in the eastern part of Ukraine, which Russia has turned from fertile fields into scorched land, requires an immediate response. As we prepare to commemorate the victory of the Second World War, we must do everything possible to curtail Russia's growing militarism and expansionism and avert its defiance of international law.

The Russian side ignores the recent Minsk agreements outlining comprehensive measures towards a political settlement. In particular, Russia and its proxies in eastern Ukraine have not only disregarded the ceasefire that was designed to trigger the entire Minsk package, but have also undertaken an offensive on the town of Debaltseve and have continued attacking other Ukrainian towns and villages. Militants and their Russian masters have blocked the activities of the

Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe Special Monitoring Mission, which was vested with the special authority to monitor the ceasefire and withdrawal of heavy weapons from the contact line.

We cannot afford to lose more servicemen, whose death toll has already exceeded 1,500. We cannot tolerate our innocent civilians continuing to die under the constant shelling by terrorists and Russian regular forces. We cannot stand by while Ukrainian citizens in the occupied areas are deprived of the basic conditions of normal life and subjected to abuse of their rights. We cannot watch while the Minsk agreements are continuously violated as Russia persists in transferring the most sophisticated offensive weapons into the eastern part of Ukraine and in turning Ukraine into a shooting range. We cannot accept that Russia has turned Crimea into an isolated military camp and its residents into pariahs.

Lastly, we cannot accept that some are still behaving as if nothing is happening and as if there are no red lines for aggression. In that regard, we are considering requesting the United Nations to deploy a mission, possibly a peacekeeping operation, to Ukraine. That initiative would not supersede the Minsk agreements. To the contrary, we view such operation as an indispensable instrument to ultimately help implement the agreements and restore peace. We expect that the Member States of the United Nations and, above all, the Security Council, will support such a request for assistance. In our view, it will be a crash test of the United Nations ability to maintain international peace and security.

The President (*spoke in Chinese*): I now give the floor to the representative of the United Arab Emirates.

Mr. Gargash (United Arab Emirates): I thank you, Mr. President, for presiding over this important debate. I would also like to thank the Secretary-General for his briefing.

As we approach the seventieth anniversary of the founding of the universal and indispensable Organization, the United Arab Emirates reaffirms its commitment to the core principles of the Charter of the United Nations and takes this opportunity to reflect on how best to collectively equip the United Nations to deal with the ever-more complex challenges before us. The pressure of these challenges is fracturing the global security order and being exploited by non-State actors. Today more than at any time in recent history, we need a strong and effective United Nations and Security Counci. In that context, the United Arab Emirates would offer the following observations.

First, it is vital that the Security Council consult and coordinate with concerned States, even when dealing with fast-moving, complex situations. Reform of these working methods will make the Council more effective and ensure that the full range of perspectives of those countries most affected is considered.

Secondly, Article 52 of the Charter of the United Nations states:

> "The Security Council shall encourage the development of pacific settlement of local disputes through such regional arrangements".

Neighbouring States have the most to gain from the peaceful resolution of a security crisis, and everything to lose from protracted conflict. The role of regional organizations as an essential component of the international security system must be further utilized and supported by the Security Council.

Thirdly, and perhaps most importantly, greater consideration must be taken of the human cost of protracted debates and inaction. For example, the crisis in Syria has forcibly displaced close to 11 million people — 3 million beyond its borders and 7.6 million internally. Additionally, the suffering inflicted on the Palestinian population, within Palestine and in the diaspora, remains one of the gravest injustices in the Arab region and has ramifications for the entire world.

In many parts of our region — especially in Syria, Iraq and Yemen — current challenges have further highlighted the need for legitimate, international engagement. On a positive note, we would like to commend the Security Council, and Jordan and the United Kingdom in particular, for their efforts to consult and involve the Gulf Cooperation Council in the drafting of resolution 2201 (2015). Implementation is now the priority challenge in Yemen, and the United Arab Emirates stands ready to assist in this critical task. The United Arab Emirates also reaffirms our commitment to the legitimate Government headed by President Hadi Mansour, calls for the release of Prime Minister Bahah from house arrest, and urges a return to the political process that was derailed through the use of force by the Houthi militias.

With regard to Libya, the United Arab Emirates was horrified by the recent atrocities and by the ongoing terrorist attacks plaguing Libya and neighbouring countries. We extend our full support to the endeavours of Special Representative Bernardino León. There is an urgent need for a political agreement. However, a political strategy must be accompanied by a robust posture that ensures that extremism and terrorism do not take advantage of the ongoing international mediation. That is why the United Arab Emirates unconditionally endorses the draft resolution steered by Libya and Egypt to lift the arms embargo on the legitimate Libyan authorities. That is a necessary step for the legitimate Libyan Government and the House of Representatives to exercise their sovereign power and secure regional stability. Any delay will seriously impact the situation on the ground and send a dangerous signal to the militant groups responsible for the atrocities. The risks of militants gaining control of Libya's significant resources and utilizing them to export their extremist activities across borders are a clear and present danger, not only for our region but for the world. Our resoluteness as the international community is required, or we will face a much more complicated and dangerous situation in Libya.

We should also note where the international community is making progress. Last week, the United Arab Emirates was one of 60 countries to attend the Summit on Countering Violent Extremism, hosted by the United States White House, where the anti-Daesh coalition confirmed it had made strategic advances on the ground. At the United Nations, Security Council efforts, including resolution 2199 (2015), sponsored by the Russian Federation, to cut off the financial lifelines of these groups, and resolutions 2170 (2014) and 2178 (2014), on combating the flow of foreign fighters, are significant.

Further normative developments to inhibit the transmission of extremist messages — for example, through social media — are also encouraging. As President Barack Obama announced at last week's Summit, the United States, in collaboration with the United Arab Emirates, will establish a new digital communications hub to work with religious leaders, civil society and community leaders to counter terrorist propaganda. Those efforts have been vital in the global campaign to tackle the threat of extremism. Next, we must focus on cooperating to eliminate the root causes of extremism. In the United Arab Emirates, we are building a national model of moderation, tolerance and unity. We believe that our model is a contemporary counter-narrative to extremism and a clear refutation of the brutal and false message of extremists.

The challenge of countering extremism requires an urgent, global, coordinated and multi-stakeholder effort. There are many important United Nations initiatives in place, particularly with regard to counter-terrorism, but there is now a critical need to support effective, State-led policy interventions to counter extremism through social, economic and political means and on multiple levels. I am pleased to announce today at the Security Council that the United Arab Emirates is launching a diplomatic initiative aimed at building international cooperation and facilitating dialogue through a contact group on countering extremism. This strategic effort will focus on developing and disseminating concrete solutions and best practices in countering extremism. The progress made through the contact group will complement and reinforce the efforts of the anti-Daesh coalition and support the United Nations to take effective collective measures for the prevention and removal of threats in conformity with the principles of justice and international law, as enshrined in the Charter.

Let me conclude by congratulating China on its successful stewardship of the Security Council during its presidency.

The President (*spoke in Chinese*): I now give the floor to the representative of India.

Mr. Mukerji (India): We should like to congratulate China on its presidency of the Security Council for this month. We appreciate the briefing given to us today by the Secretary-General. We encourage the Secretary-General to elaborate the briefing into a report that can be given to world leaders when they meet later this year for the seventieth anniversary summit on the founding of the United Nations. We acknowledge the very useful concept note (S/2015/87, annex) circulated by the Chinese delegation for today's open debate.

First, the Security Council has taken the lead in referring to the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations while attempting to maintain international peace and security. It is a matter of concern for those of us who are not privileged to sit permanently in the Council that the Council's invocation of those purposes and principles appears selective, to suit the national interests of powerful Member States. The Council's decisions on issues not directly linked with maintaining international peace and security cannot encroach upon the jurisdiction of the General Assembly, where all of us are equally represented.

Secondly, we endorse tackling global challenges together in a cooperative manner, especially to implement our development agenda. The very nature of those challenges, which are increasingly transboundary in nature, requires concerted action. Terrorism is a good example — it directly threatens development, especially in many developing countries. However, concerted action by the Council to implement its landmark decisions, including resolution 1373 (2001), which imposes counter-terrorism obligations on all Member States, is absent. Counter-terrorism sanctions regimes, especially set out under resolution 1267 (1999), are administered ambivalently and opaquely by the Council. The listing of the perpetrators of the most heinous of terrorist crimes is subject to the whims of powerful Member States. Even brazen public violations of the sanctions regime by listed individuals and entities, far from attracting punitive measures, do not even elicit the Council's mildest censure. That inaction is a serious deviation from the responsibilities given to the Council by the Charter, with dangerous consequences.

Thirdly, we are glad to see the concept note acknowledge the need to take into account the views of troop-contributing countries while formulating peacekeeping mandates. We deeply regret that the Council has so far repeatedly violated, and in fact diluted, the clear provisions of Article 44 of the Charter, which explicitly requires the Council to invite the Member States contributing troops that are not members of the Council to participate in the decisions of the Council. That has seriously compromised the objectives of peacekeeping.

Fourthly, we endorse the call to give priority to the peaceful settlement of disputes while using the provisions of Chapter VI of the Charter. The festering situations in Africa, West Asia and, lately, Europe are vivid illustrations of the Council's inability or disinclination to use those provisions. We are convinced that only through an inclusive political dialogue process can any lasting peace and security be sustained. The Council must invest more time, energy and resources into implementing Chapter VI of the Charter.

Finally, it is ironic that calls for democracy and the rule of law are being made in a Council that itself embodies the undemocratic stranglehold of the privileges of a few, forged by a wartime alliance that no longer exists. The logic of democracy and the anguished faces of human suffering across the world call for urgent action to reform the Council. We must do so this year if we are to learn the right lessons of history.

The President (*spoke in Chinese*): I now give the floor to the representative of Sweden.

Mr. Thöresson (Sweden): I thank you and your delegation, Mr. President, for convening and presiding over this very important meeting.

I have the honour to speak today on behalf of the five Nordic countries — Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway and my own country, Sweden.

Seventy years ago, with extraordinary foresight, our nations did something remarkable, and to this day unrivalled. In the service of coming generations, we reaffirmed the core principles of human rights to protect humankind from the scourge of war. We decided to unite our strengths to maintain international peace and security and not use armed force, save for the common interest. That was the purpose for which the United Nations was created.

Today, that is still our task and common goal. Today, that is still what needs to be respected by all — respect for the sovereignty of the country that faces external aggression or occupation of its territory, respect for the dignity and worth of any human person who is denigrated and denied his or her human rights. Today, however, that task is more challenging than ever. We live in an interconnected world, where what happens in another's country will eventually effect what happens in mine. Conflicts can be inter-State, but more often intra-State and multifaceted. Transnational threats, such as terrorism, organized crime and global pandemics, show that security threats are no longer confined within borders. Now more than ever, collective threats need to be dealt with collectively. Based on the norms of the Charter, we need to act through prevention, mediation, regional cooperation and, as a last resort, force. To be effective, those efforts require the active involvement of women as well as men.

Our ability and willingness to act decisively and collectively leave much to be desired. We have conferred on the Security Council the primary responsibility of maintaining international peace and security. We have agreed that the Council acts on our behalf in carrying out its duties. We therefore expect individual Council members to always act in the spirit of the Charter, to never to give way to any threat, and to never abuse the trust we have vested in them by using their Council seats to pursue national interests. Our faith that this spirit will prevail, despite the many challenges against it, is what motivates us Nordic countries in our unwavering support of the many peacekeeping and peacebuilding activities mandated by the Security Council. It is also the guiding light whenever we take a seat at the Council table and assume our share of the responsibility.

When stating the principle of sovereign equality of all Member States, and in that regard particularly mindful of the security and territorial integrity of small and medium-sized States, the founders of the United Nations never intended sovereignty to be an excuse for the international community to avert its eyes from flagrant atrocity crimes. The principle of sovereignty, therefore, must have a dimension of human security — for men, women and children — as well as for the security of States. Those are the standards and norms that underpin the Charter of the United Nations and that should underpin our collective security today. Those are the standards to which Trygve Lie, Dag Hammarskjöld and their successors tried to hold the world. As the nature of today's conflicts tells us, nothing else will do.

The President (*spoke in Chinese*): I now give the floor to the representative of Brazil.

Mr. Patriota (Brazil): Mr. President, I thank you for organizing this timely debate and for composing a sensible concept note (S/2015/87, annex). We deeply appreciate the Chinese proposal to reflect on the norms and values enshrined by the Charter of the United Nations. I would also like to thank the Secretary-General for his instructive presentation.

The seventieth anniversary of the Allied victory in the Second World War and of the founding of the United Nations, to be celebrated this year, will coincide with a vital juncture for the Organization and for the international order as a whole. As the concept note presented by China correctly points out, the world has undergone profound and complex changes over the past decades. The rise of economic globalization and the emergence of a multipolar geopolitical environment are but two of the major trends that define the age we live in.

New challenges have materialized that cannot feasibly be solved by any single country, for they are truly global in nature. At least two of those challenges can be considered unifying elements capable of contributing to the enhancement of a world order centred on cooperation, with the United Nations at its core. I am thinking of the fight against terrorism and the challenges posed by climate change. Members of the United Nations are aware that we can succeed in those two daunting tasks only by joining forces, and we are all ready to do so through inclusive processes that abide by or promote universally applicable laws and understandings. If we are serious about promoting the principles and purposes of the Charter in the twenty-first century, upholding multilateralism is not just desirable; it is the only responsible course of action.

As we consider the shortcomings in the present world order, which some authors are starting to refer to as "disorder", the lessons of history should guide us. Two hundred years ago, the Congress of Vienna sealed the replacement of a unipolar European moment with an innovative system of plurilateral consultations — a context that can structurally be compared to our current transition towards multipolarity, even if the circumstances are obviously very different. Those arrangements established in Vienna preserved a certain stability in Europe for almost a century, but became subject to irreversible stress under the strain of rising nationalism, regional conflicts, economic hardship, all compounded by political shortsightedness and complacency.

A generation later, another ambitious endeavour in favour of collective security, the League of Nations, rose from the ashes of the Great War of 1914-1918. Many of its legal and moral tenets, such as the prohibition of war and the obligation to abide by international law, are still with us today. Sadly, the League was undone by its limited membership and by the absence of enforcement mechanisms, the result being that an even worse catastrophe ensued in the Second World War. As a result of their inability to adapt to shifts in geopolitical trends and to develop more legitimate and efficient mechanisms for dialogue and diplomacy, both the Concert of Europe and the League of Nations failed to prevent devastating conflicts.

We must not allow the Organization to follow a similar path. In shaping a new cooperative multilateral order, attuned to multipolarity, either the United Nations will be at the centre of that order, or there will be no order. Unfortunately, alarming signs of systemic failure can already be noticed. The existing order is being corroded by disrespect for the United Nations Charter, flawed strategies that privilege the use of force and disregard the role of diplomacy, old-fashioned notions of spheres of influence, and misplaced concepts of morality that aggravate humanitarian crises under the claim of protecting civilians.

A certain measure of hope can be derived from the fact that multilateral frameworks for cooperation have been recently improved or even created in a variety of areas. Key examples include the replacement of the Group of Seven by the Group of 20 as a leading forum for cooperation on economic and financial issues, the creation of the Human Rights Council and the Peacebuilding Commission, the establishment of universal membership to the Governing Council of the United Nations Environment Programme, and the creation of the High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development, as recommended by the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development. A certain measure of reassurance can also be derived from the fact that there is unity around certain key objectives, while the body of international law, as well as the mechanisms for cooperation established since 1945, receive considerable attention from Governments, the media and civil society.

When it comes to peace and security, however, the international community has yet to update its structures of governance. Moreover, the current system is being tested not only by contemporary challenges and crises, but also by unilateralism and seriously flawed responses. An eloquent illustration of this state of affairs is presented in the article published by Alan Kuperman in the March/April edition of *Foreign Affairs* on the current Libya debacle. This worrisome pattern of dysfunctionality resonates outside this building, as perceived by The Elders, chaired by former Secretary-General Kofi Annan. As The Elders rightly emphasized in a recent statement presenting four proposals to build a better and fairer United Nations system,

> "all institutions must adapt to cope with new circumstances — and today's circumstances are very different from those of 1945".

It is therefore urgent for us to ponder the high price of inaction, reflect on history, reaffirm the strong commitment to the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations, and rise to the challenge our Heads of State and Government entrusted to us in the 2005 World Summit outcome document (resolution 60/1), which called for early reform of the Security Council.

Brazil shares with a large number of delegations the conviction that the seventieth anniversary of the United Nations provides an opportunity, which cannot be missed, to achieve a concrete outcome to the crucial matter of updating our collective security framework. Let us echo the political will, the foresight and the tenacity displayed seven decades ago by the founders of the United Nations. If we seek to reaffirm the principles and purposes of the Charter and to foster an international order based on justice and cooperation, we must revitalize the Security Council. Only then will the Organization be truly fit for purpose and able to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war.

The President (*spoke in Chinese*): I now give the floor to the representative of Pakistan.

Mr. Sahebzada Ahmed Khan (Pakistan): First of all, Sir, I would ask you to kindly convey our warm welcome to Foreign Minister Wang Yi, as well as our utmost pleasure at seeing him chairing this open debate of the Security Council. His presence in this organ is reflective of China's unwavering commitment to the Charter of the United Nations. Pakistan would also like to pay its respects to the large number of ministers who have gathered here for this very important debate.

The true value of any blessing in life can be assessed only in its absence. We therefore find wisdom in your initiative to celebrate the United Nations Charter while reflecting on history. The world before 1945 bore the scourge of the two World Wars and their devastation, the horrific internecine conflicts of the eighteenth century and the associated travails of humankind. We must therefore keep remind ourselves of the lessons learned from the international conflicts that preceded the Charter of the United Nations. While our quest for absolute peace has yet to be fulfilled, since the adoption of the Charter, humankind has never had the kind of relative peace, prosperity and development that it has today.

This year in the history of the United Nations is not just for celebrations; it is a time to remind ourselves of and reflect on the values that strengthen the Charter of the United Nations, a time to renew our commitment to the sovereign equality of States. We must respect the sovereignty and territorial integrity of States, peaceful settlement of international disputes and non-interference in internal affairs of States, and we must refrain from the use of force or the threat to use force against the territorial integrity and political independence of States.

On the basis of these principles, Pakistan remains committed to the maintenance of international peace and security. As the leading troop contributor to the United Nations, with over 8,000 troops and boots on the ground, Pakistan is committed to global peace and security, which is evident from the sacrifices that we have made. More than 140 Pakistani troops have laid down their lives and countless others have suffered injuries. We continue to stand firmly by United Nations peacekeeping efforts.

The Charter places special emphasis on resolving international disputes by peaceful means, through dialogue and consultations. The Security Council should therefore make frequent recourse to the tools available to it under Chapter VI and should employ Chapter VII measures only as a last resort. Its actions should therefore conform to the purposes and principles of the Charter as provided for in Article 24.

The Charter also promotes the universal application of international law. The Security Council, through its uniform actions, must lead by example and exude credibility. Its use of force should be consistent with the Charter principles of collective security. It should make optimum use of the International Court of Justice. Long-standing disputes and situations must be resolved in accordance with Security Council resolutions. Let me emphasize that the fulfilment of the inalienable rights of all peoples, especially the right to self-determination, would pave the way for uniform implementation of all resolutions.

We fully agree that there is a need to uphold democracy and the rule of law in international relations. All Members of the United Nations, irrespective of their size and population, have an equal stake in the making of international order, and their participation should therefore be on an equal footing. Lastly, with this spirit in mind, let us resolve to pursue our goals towards collective security and common development through a win-win situation of cooperation.

The President (*spoke in Chinese*): I now give the floor to the Head of the Delegation of the European Union to the United Nations.

Mr. Mayr-Harting (European Union): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the European Union and its member States. Turkey, Montenegro, Serbia, Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Ukraine, the Republic of Moldova and Georgia align themselves with this statement.

We should like to thank the Chinese presidency of the Security Council and you personally, Mr. President, for providing the Council and the United Nations as a whole with this unique opportunity to reaffirm our commitment to the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations. This debate also gives us the opportunity to pay tribute to the memory of those who sacrificed themselves in the hope of a free and democratic world, established on the universal values and principles that also inspired the foundations of the European Union.

In the concept note (S/2015/87, annex), you remind us, Sir, of the core promise of the founders of this Organization: to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war. But preventing future wars was not the only undertaking of the signatories of the Charter 70 years ago. The very same preambular passage of the Charter also stresses their determination to reaffirm faith in fundamental human rights, in the dignity and worth of the human person, in the equal rights of men and women and of nations large and small; to establish conditions under which justice and respect for the obligations arising from treaties and other sources of international law can be maintained; and to promote social progress and better standards of life in larger freedom. In its very first paragraphs, the Charter thus defined the three pillars of this Organization: peace and security, human rights, and development.

The Security Council obviously has a very specific role with regard to the first of these pillars, due to its primary responsibility under the Charter for the maintenance of international peace and security. But the European Union also believes that the Security Council has its own specific responsibilities with regard to the other two pillars. The Security Council itself has underlined this fact in a number of landmark statements and resolutions. In May 2009, the Council welcomed a statement by the African Union that unconstitutional changes of Government can pose a threat to peace and security. In July 2011, the Council expressed its concern that possible adverse effects of climate change may, in the long run, aggravate certain existing threats to international peace and security. And in April 2006 and again in November 2009, the Council noted that systematic, flagrant and widespread violations of international humanitarian and human rights law in situations of armed conflict may constitute a threat to international peace and security.

The European Union and its member States believe that the Council can in particular make its own key contribution to the protection of fundamental human rights as one of the core purposes of the United Nations. In particular, it has the important power to refer situations in which genocide, crimes against humanity or war crimes have been committed to the International Criminal Court, as well as by deciding on targeted sanctions.

The Charter calls on all Members of the Organization to refrain in their international relations from the threat or use of force against the territorial integrity or political independence of any State. The European Union and its member States are deeply committed to this core principle of the United Nations, which the Chinese presidency has also highlighted in its concept note. We firmly believe that there is no place for the use of force and coercion to change internationally recognized borders in Europe or elsewhere in the twenty-first century. In this regard, the European Union recalls General Assembly resolution 68/262 and remains strongly committed to upholding the sovereignty, independence, unity and territorial integrity of Ukraine.

The concept note prepared by the Chinese presidency of the Security Council rightly underlines the centrality of international law as well as of the rule of law as foundations of this Organization and of international relations in general. The Charter itself is one of the cornerstones of international law. Respect for the principles of the Charter and international law is also one of the guiding principles of the European Union's international action, as set out in the Treaty of the European Union.

Abiding by the rule of law is essential for the peaceful settlement of international disputes. We attach great importance to all the various instruments described in Article 33 of the Charter. In recent years, particular attention has been paid to mediation.

At the same time, we would like to emphasize the role of judicial mechanisms in the prevention and resolution of legal disputes. We strongly support the role of the International Court of Justice as the principal judicial organ of the United Nations for the peaceful settlement of disputes among States. We recognize the importance of its advisory opinions, and we call upon all States that have not yet done so to consider accepting the jurisdiction of the Court in accordance with its Statute.

We also see the linkages between the rule of law at the international and domestic levels. As former Secretary-General Kofi Annan already put it in his report,"In larger freedom: towards development, security and human rights for all" (A/59/2005), some 10 years ago: "I strongly believe that every nation that proclaims the rule of law at home must respect it abroad and that every nation that insists on it abroad must enforce it at home" (ibid., para. 133). This is a position the European Union fully shares.

Finally, let me say a short word about the contribution of regional and other organizations to the realization of the purposes of the Charter. This was the subject of another milestone thematic debate of this Council, also under Chinese chairmanship, in January 2010 (S/PV.6257). The presidential statement agreed at that time (S/PRST/2010/1) recognized the important role that regional and subregional organizations can play in the peaceful settlement of conflicts, as well as in peacekeeping and post-conflict peacebuilding, inter alia.

In another presidential statement, agreed in February 2014, the Security Council specifically recognized the European Union's comprehensive approach to the maintenance of international peace and security, as well as its commitment, and that of its member States, to international peacekeeping, peacebuilding, humanitarian assistance and financial and logistical support (S/PRST/2014/4). We see this statement as an encouragement to further develop and deepen our cooperation with the United Nations, but also with other regional organizations, in particular the African Union.

Chapter VIII of the Charter bears testimony to the fact that the founders of the United Nations foresaw some of the advantages that the cooperation with regional arrangements could provide. We now have a much clearer picture of the huge contribution that regional and cross-regional cooperation and integration can make to international peace and security, the rule of law, human rights and sustainable development, by no means only in Europe, but also in many other parts of the world. This is a new dimension of international relations that can substantially enrich the work of the United Nations in our collective efforts to reaffirm, defend and realize the purposes and principles of the Charter.

The President (*spoke in Chinese*): I now give the floor to the representative of Germany.

Mr. Braun (Germany): Germany aligns itself with the statement just made by the representative of the European Union.

In our own national statement, I would like to start with a quotation: "He who closes his eyes to the past will be blind to the present." These words were spoken by the recently deceased German President Von Weizsäcker in 1985 at the fortieth anniversary commemoration of the end of the Second World War. Today, 30 years later, his words have not lost their relevance.

The Second World War — unleashed by Nazi Germany — cost millions of lives and laid waste to countries around the globe. While the world was burning, visionary leaders set out to establish the United Nations to free humankind from the scourge of war and to replace the law of force with the force of law. As we celebrate the seventieth anniversary of the United Nations this year, it is only right to pay tribute to the founding mothers and fathers of the principles they enshrined in the Charter. We therefore welcome the initiative taken by the Chinese presidency to call for today's open debate.

My country became an United Nations Member State only in 1973. For us, it was far more than a mere formal act; it was the culmination of our journey towards rejoining the world community. The people of Germany and its successive Governments had set out on this road with a clear vision — that it was in our best interests to be firmly anchored in collective security systems; that in an increasingly interdependent world, one can gain only by also giving; and that this approach requires strong ties with our neighbours and partners that transcend traditional sovereignty.

That is what lies at the core of the historic project of European unification, and it is what inspires and drives our foreign policy today, including our multilateral diplomacy here in New York. Having learned the lessons of the past, Germany today is willing to take on more responsibility in the world, within a multilateral framework and with a clear emphasis on diplomacy, peaceful settlement of conflicts and civilian crisis prevention.

The goals and principles of the United Nations Charter remain as valid as they were in 1945. Peace, human rights and development are no less important now than they were 70 years ago. But the world has changed since then and so have the ways and means by which the international community is striving to attain these goals. Over the past decades, the United Nations system has demonstrated its ability to adapt to new realities and meet emerging challenges. It has expanded its toolkit to respond to the new nature of armed conflict. There is also a growing understanding that human rights should know no borders and that those responsible for the most egregious violations must be held accountable.

Lastly, the world has come to understand that global sustainable development is a common responsibility. In a world of finite natural resources, no country can prosper at the expense of others. On all these issues, the United Nations provides a proven framework to reach global solutions. Its unique legitimacy and ability to meet new challenges must therefore be safeguarded.

The foregoing also requires that the structures and institutions of the United Nations are willing and able to live up to their tasks. Reviews of the peacekeeping architecture, the peacebuilding framework and the implementation of resolution 1325 (2000) have been initiated. We welcome and actively contribute to these reviews and processes. Only when seen together in a holistic and comprehensive understanding of peace, security and development will these reviews make the United Nations fit for its eighth decade.

Voices that call for a similar commitment to update the United Nations peace and security architecture with the Security Council at its core are growing louder. We share the view that it is high time to consider whether the Council's structure — largely unchanged since 1945 — allows it to effectively address the challenges of today's world.

As much as has been achieved over the past decades, serious challenges remain. One of the biggest challenges to the international legal order remains the blatant violation of the territorial integrity of Ukraine through the illegal annexation of Crimea, which we will not recognize. This is an attempt to redraw borders through the use of force. We are deeply worried by reports of ongoing violations of the agreed ceasefire. The Security Council underlined the importance of the full implementation of the Minsk Agreements in resolution

2202 (2015) last week, which we fully support. We call on all sides to stop fighting and remove heavy weapons as agreed. We think that deliberations in the Security Council could benefit greatly from cooperation with the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe.

On other matters, chlorine gas has been systematically and repeatedly used as a weapon in Syria by the Assad regime. Radical extremists — from West Africa to Iraq, from Paris to Copenhagen — threaten the values enshrined in the United Nations Charter and pervert the teachings of Islam. As a result of the proliferation of conflicts, the world is confronted with the largest refugee crisis since the Second World War. Climate change is threatening not only livelihoods, prosperity and security in numerous Member States; if unmitigated, it may threaten the very existence of humankind.

The response to those threats and challenges cannot be to revert to old patterns of statecraft based on spheres of influence, to pursue national interests in a zero-sum logic or to simply close our eyes — or our borders. History has shown that humankind is best served when cooperation trumps confrontation and when the strength of the law prevails over the law of the strongest. That recognition led to the creation of the United Nations 70 years ago, and it is still valid today. We need a strong United Nations at the centre of global governance. Building a stronger United Nations is our collective duty. We owe it to our citizens and to those who 70 years ago said “Never again”.

Mr. Reyes Rodríguez (Cuba) (*spoke in Spanish*): Cuba considers this to be a very timely debate on this subject as we approach the seventieth anniversary of the founding of the United Nations and the adoption of its Charter. The year 2015 also marks the seventieth anniversary of the end of the Second World War and of the nuclear bombing of the cities of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, which were horrific chapters in the history of humankind that should not be repeated.

Realizing the right to peace requires eradicating the threats that conspire against that common desire. The consecration of altruistic purposes and principles in the Charter is not enough. It is essential that Member States and other international actors strictly adhere to such principles in their conduct. Flagrant violations of the Charter of the United Nations, including interference in the internal affairs of other States for the purpose of hegemonic domination, acts of aggression, wars over natural resources, neocolonialist practices in foreign policy, the unfair and exclusionary current international order, the inequality and selfishness resulting from neoliberal capitalist globalization, discrimination and xenophobia, and the denial of peoples’ right to self-determination constitute serious violations of the right to peace.

The purposes and principles enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations and international law are violated when States resort to the use and threat of the use of force and to serious actions taken against the sovereignty of other nations, including by implementing unilateral coercive measures. While it is true that sustainable development cannot be achieved without peace and stability, it is truer still that there will be no peace or stability without development and there will be no peace or security if millions of people are condemned to hunger, poverty and hopelessness.

The Security Council has an important role to fulfil in relation to the primary responsibility of maintaining international peace and security and promoting respect for the purposes and principles of the Charter. It must perform its functions in accordance with the powers that were conferred upon it by the Charter of the United Nations. The members of the Security Council should be the first to give priority to peaceful solutions and exercise a clear, effective and resolute resistance against the recourse to war. They must take advantage of any opportunity that might save lives. They should not be standard-bearers for the philosophy of regime change, which is a clear attack against peoples’ self-determination.

As clearly confirmed by the Declaration on Principles of International Law concerning Friendly Relations and Cooperation among States in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations, respect for the sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity of States, the non-use or threat of the use of force, self-determination and non-interference in the internal affairs of States constitute the basic foundation of international law and a prerequisite for the peaceful coexistence of nations, sustainable development and the promotion and protection of all human rights for all.

The rule of law in international relations is incompatible with unilateralism and economic, commercial and financial policies and measures contrary to international law. The rule of law at the international level is also violated when actions are carried out to impose regime change, intervene in the internal affairs of States or incite internal conflicts in sovereign States under foreign agendas aimed at hegemonic domination and influence.

Seventy years after its foundation, the United Nations must be strengthened and the Security Council democratized, to make them standards of transparency, democracy and participation by the entire international community in the resolution of pressing global problems. A revitalized General Assembly is also needed to take the central role in the realization of the right of peoples and of every human being to a just, democratic and equitable international order that supports the efforts of States in the construction of a sovereign future that each nation decides for itself.

Cuba wishes to reaffirm the unwavering commitment of the Cuban people to the Charter of the United Nations, in particular its purposes and principles, and reiterate its vocation for peace in this forum. The historical leader of the Cuban revolution, Fidel Castro Ruz, said that the struggle of peoples for their sovereignty and independence is the fight for peace. Cuba has fought for peace, fighting the exploitation of man by man. Cuba has fought for peace to defend its sovereignty.

Cuba will continue to contribute with its modest resources and all its energy to the well-being of peoples, especially those most in need. It will remain committed to supporting international cooperation for the achievement of sustainable development with inclusion and in defence of international peace and security.

Mr. Ruiz (Colombia) (*spoke in Spanish*): At the outset, let me congratulate you, Mr. President, and your delegation for leading the work of the Security Council for the month of February. I also welcome the statement made by the Secretary-General at the start of this debate.

The issue before us is particularly timely, as we are approaching the celebration of the seventieth anniversary of the founding of the United Nations, and as we face multiple crises that are typically very different in nature and that show the evolving nature of the threats to international peace and security. While the environment is changing, the fundamental pillars on which the Organization is based are still today as important and relevant as they were 70 years ago.

As described in the concept note prepared by China (S/2015/87, annex), respect for sovereignty, territorial integrity, political independence, non-interference in the internal affairs of States and the peaceful settlement of international disputes are the cornerstones on which international law and international relations are based. These are not empty concepts that are devoid of meaning in today's world. They are values and principles that underpin a system where States — whether large or small — can live and work in a cooperative, free, independent and democratic manner, in a secure environment and for the benefit of their respective people and humankind in general.

That is why we should avoid expansive and malleable interpretations that are designed to undermine and distort the purposes and principles of the Charter and make them irrelevant; otherwise, we would be prioritizing a system in which might makes right, the diversity that we all have is ignored, and the freedom of societies to determine their own destinies is curtailed. In that context, Colombia endorses the notion expressed by China in the concept note, where it says that,

> "Equal and democratic participation must be upheld in the establishment of international rules. In particular, small and medium-sized developing countries, which make up the majority of the membership of the United Nations, should participate on an equal footing in the establishment of international rules related to peace and security."

Moreover, after almost 70 years of experience, we must once again recognize that, in the maintenance of international peace and security, there is no general recipe that is applicable to all cases. We have seen a gradual trend within the Security Council to address cross-cutting thematic issues, which has the potential to simplify the approaches taken to issues that, owing to their nature, need to be addressed on a case-by-case basis. We must avoid generalized approaches and measures that do not reflect specific contexts and do not recognize the diversity of factors that should be considered in determining whether or not the Security Council should consider a situation.

Since the time the Charter of the United Nations was negotiated, Colombia has promoted cooperation with regional organizations and the peaceful settlement of disputes, placing particular importance on the implementation of Chapters VI and VII of the Charter. Over these 70 years, the greatest successes of the United Nations in general and of the Security Council in particular include some cases in which we have worked with regional organizations, emphasizing policy coherence, a common vision, uniformity in the interpretation of international norms and certainty with respect to achieving our common objectives. That is one of the main reasons to reaffirm the purposes and principles of the United Nations, in particular of Chapter VIII, as these represent the underpinning of our common action of cooperation and our unity of purpose.

While there are differences in the membership, structure and methods of work of the United Nations and the many regional organizations, it has been repeatedly shown that these entities have a privileged position, with unique access to key actors and exceptional knowledge and experiences with respect to the situation in their region. Thus the Charter recognizes their importance as privileged forums for the settlement of disputes and their importance as strategic partners in the activities of the Security Council.

The language of the Charter is clear; it gives priority to the peaceful settlement of disputes and the avoidance of coercive measures, using them only as a tool of last resort. We must work on mechanisms and working methods that allow for the full implementation of Chapter VI and the development of modalities that give priority to the use of different means of settling disputes peacefully, in an inclusive, impartial, objective and depoliticized way.

The President (*spoke in Chinese*): I now give the floor to the representative of the Republic of Korea.

Mr. Oh Joon (Republic of Korea): I wish to thank you, Mr. President, for organizing today's debate and to congratulate you on your assumption of the presidency of the Security Council for the month of February.

Looking back on the road we have travelled in the 70 years since the launch of the United Nations, the purposes and principles of the United Nations have been a guiding light in the building of a more peaceful and prosperous international community.

The current global security environment, however, is a far cry from what it was after the Second World War. Various challenges of a wide-ranging nature have evolved quickly. Conflicts are much more complicated in terms of their causes and forms, as we see in non-State-actor-related security issues, intra-State conflicts, transnational violent extremism and cybersecurity threats, to name but a few.

In the face of these diverse challenges, the principles of the United Nations Charter should continue to guide our efforts. At the same time, we must recall that those principles reflect more fundamental values. The principles enshrined in the United Nations Charter, such as sovereign equality, territorial integrity and non-intervention, are not goals per se; they are the tools that we use to realize our values of preventing war and protecting humanity.

But in reality, we sometimes witness principles being invoked for reasons of political convenience. Future historians looking back at today might take note of the struggle of the United Nations to overcome such constraints and remain true to the underlying values of the Charter. We also need to be wary of another kind of challenge to the values of the Charter, one that can come from attempts to disregard the lessons of history.

Peacekeeping operations are a case in point. While respecting principles such as national sovereignty, the concept of peacekeeping operations is being evolved to bring peace and protect civilians. We believe that the Secretary-General's comprehensive review on peace operations will be another milestone in this regard and look forward to contributing to building on this review. Some other important initiatives by the Secretary-General, such as Human Rights up Front and the open-door policy demonstrate the growing nexus between security and human rights.

Last but not least, our quest for a more responsible and effective United Nations would not be complete without joint cooperation in bringing the necessary reform to the Security Council, the primary tool in our collective efforts to maintain peace and security.

Such reform should be future-oriented and membership-driven instead of expanding the exceptional status introduced to settle a World War 70 years ago. Our common goal is a more accountable and more functional Security Council. To achieve this, we have to reduce the possibilities for inaction and increase the potential for action. The Republic of Korea will continue to contribute to this process.

The President (*spoke in Chinese*): I now give the floor to the representative of Mexico.

Mr. Alday González (Mexico) (*spoke in Spanish*): A quick look at the list of crises that the Council has dealt with this month alone shows clearly that despite our collective international achievements in terms of the maintenance of international peace and security, much remains for the United Nations to do in order to fulfil the mission that was entrusted to it 70 years ago.

That is why we would like to thank the delegation of China for this opportunity to take the floor during this open debate on the challenges we face in terms of preserving succeeding generations from the scourge of war and, above all, to discuss the lessons learned and what actions can be taken in order to complete our work.

Collective security is based on respect for the sovereignty and legal equality of States and the self-determination of peoples. Observance of these principles has undoubtedly made it possible to avoid a new world war, but we are convinced that the maintenance of international peace and security requires all, not just some, Member States to work together in order to achieve these objectives with greater efficiency and effectiveness.

The changing nature of armed conflicts and the new threats we are facing in the twenty-first century remind us daily of the relevance of the purposes and principles of the Charter and of our collective responsibility to respond to traditional threats and to the new challenges being posed by non-State actors, which, through atrocities one more cruel than the other, violate the basic norms of international law and threaten structurally human rights and the rule of law.

Mexico believes that there can be no lasting peace without justice. The effective prevention of armed conflicts requires also a collective effort to strengthen the rule of law both nationally and internationally. It is a prerequisite for ensuring the development and emergence of more just and inclusive societies. Development and the rule of law are two sides of the same coin.

Given the fact that Latin America is the region that resorts most often to the International Court of Justice, it is clear that the Mexican State recognizes the fundamental role of the Court as well as that of the International Criminal Court in terms of strengthening of the rule of law. That is why we take the opportunity of this open debate to remind the permanent members of the Security Council of the need for them to accept the mandatory jurisdiction of the International Court of Justice in order to encourage other States to strengthen their commitment to international justice.

As several speakers who have preceded me have pointed out already, the current international scenario requires reflection, analysis and a discussion of the innovative mechanisms that are needed to improve the responsiveness and efficiency of the Organization. Mexico believes that every effort aimed at maintaining international peace and security and strengthening the responsibility to protect should be accompanied by the promotion, respect for and fulfilment of human rights and international humanitarian law. We have a collective duty to strengthen prevention and cooperation mechanisms in order to support and assist Governments unable to meet their primary responsibility for protecting their peoples, and we should fight to create tight bonds between the responsibility to protect and preventive diplomacy. As a founding Member of the United Nations, Mexico considers it essential that we discuss, reach consensus on and implement reforms that reflect what we have learned over the past 70 years and, without undermining the guiding principles of the Organization, move towards a more transparent, democratic and effective structure.

Without comprehensive reform of its structure and working methods, the Security Council runs the risk of falling into irrelevance, exacerbating the problems we have to deal with and undermining the principles and purposes that sustain our collective security mechanism. Both in our national capacity and as a member of the Uniting for Consensus group, we are working to arrive at realistic and achievable commitments that address the paralysis that often prevents timely action on the part of the Security Council, while at the same time strengthening its democracy, legitimacy, transparency and accountability. Reform of the Security Council cannot be achieved by granting new privileges to a minority of States wishing to further their national interests to the detriment of the membership as a whole. Our goal should be to strengthen multilateralism, not avoid it. Mexico believes that the Charter's institutional arrangements cannot contradict the goals it promotes, and has therefore joined France in developing a code of conduct that would encourage restrictions on using the veto in situations involving war crimes, crimes against humanity or genocide.

We share the Accountability, Coherence and Transparency Group's conviction that greater inclusiveness and accountability in the Council will strengthen its efficiency and effectiveness. We welcome and support the sustained work done by its members to improve working methods. The election of the next Secretary-General presents a unique opportunity to strengthen transparency and accountability, and to achieve realistic and tangible reform around the time of the seventieth anniversary. We should discuss ideas and proposals for improving the entire selection process, starting with the nomination of candidates right through to establishing a more important and decisive role for the General Assembly.

Mexico has historically advocated for the peaceful settlement of disputes and remains convinced that genuinely strengthening the Organization's role depends to a great degree on strengthening the enforcement of Chapter VI of the Charter of the United Nations. I reiterate my country's commitment to continuing to participate actively and constructively in the enforcement and full implementation of the purposes and principles set in the Charter. The seventieth anniversary of the Organization compels us to reflect on the opportunities ahead. Member States must find sufficient political will to reassess and transform the way we operate, placing the individual at the centre of everything we do. None of our responsibilities is more important than ensuring that women, men and children around the world have the opportunity to better their lives and live in peace.

The President (*spoke in Chinese*): I now give the floor to the representative of Liechtenstein.

Mr. Barriga (Liechtenstein): I would like to thank your delegation warmly, Mr. President, for convening a debate on this very important topic. We also appreciate the opportunity for us to present the perspective of the smallest State participating in today's debate, and I would like to thank New Zealand for pointing out the importance of listening to the views of small States as well.

This morning we have heard expressions of what I believe is a worrying trend to considering the Security Council as a playground of the powerful, a place where grand geopolitical moves are made or prevented. The focus on the Charter of the United Nations in this debate is therefore appropriate and one that we appreciate. Liechtenstein affirms its strong commitment to the purposes and principles of the Charter. It might be said that that is easy for a small State with no army to do, but my point underlines the fact that for many small States, respect for the Charter is a matter of survival, and a very serious one.

It has also emerged in today's debate that everyone seems to have his favourite purposes and principles of the Charter, a choice that is usually inspired by a country's history or standing in the world. For us, the starting point for the Charter's purposes and principles is its very first purpose:

> "To maintain international peace and security, and to that end: to take effective collective measures for the prevention and removal of threats to the peace".

In our view, the Charter envisages an activist Security Council that responds to the needs of the world. It is true that the number of meetings, resolutions, field missions and so on is ever increasing; but so is the number of conflicts and the number of people affected by conflict worldwide. Today we have more refugees than at any point since the Second World War. We therefore need even more Security Council action. How do we achieve that? First, in reaffirming their commitment to the Charter, we believe that Council members must make greater effort to overcome their differences and commit to working for compromise. Rather than debating the contours of abstract concepts, they should search for practical solutions in concrete situations. In recent years that has become more difficult as differences, especially among permanent members, have grown. We therefore believe that there is now an increased responsibility on the part of the elected members of the Council to take greater ownership of the Council's work and lead the way to more compromises.

Secondly, the veto — the use of the veto, the threat of the veto and the possibility of the threat of the veto — remains the greatest procedural obstacle to Security Council actions where permanent members have difficulty agreeing on a course of action. The price of such inaction is unacceptably high when we are faced with mass atrocities and thousands of innocent victims. We cannot continue to give greater weight to the opinion of one single permanent member than to the need to save thousands of lives. We therefore reiterate our call to Security Council members not to block Council action aimed at preventing or ending mass atrocities, and to put such a commitment in writing.

Thirdly, we should recognize that the Charter and change go hand in hand. The Charter's values and principles underpin the international system and have inspired new instruments, such as the Arms Trade Treaty. We must act on our evolving understanding of threats to peace and security, as, for example, has been recognized by the Council in the case of terrorism, and as it has sometimes done in response to massive human rights violations. But we must place human rights and people's dignity, especially the rights of civilians in armed conflict, more firmly at the centre of our reference. Such an approach also constitutes a return to the Charter itself, which at the beginning of its Preamble established that we the peoples of the United Nations are determined

> "to reaffirm faith in fundamental human rights, in the dignity and worth of the human person, in the equal rights of men and women and of nations large and small".

Therefore, if the world's greatest Powers were able to make such a statement in 1945, just after the end of the Second World War and a complete collapse of human decency, they will hopefully also be determined to reaffirm their faith in the role of the Security Council, 70 years later. The Security Council Chamber remains the most important forum for that win-win cooperation that the presidency has called for.

The President (*spoke in Chinese*): I now give the floor to the representative of Australia.

Ms. Bird (Australia): I thank you, Mr. President, for convening this important debate today. As we approach the seventieth anniversary of the Charter of the United Nations, it is timely to focus on the issues that lie at the heart at the system of collective security, a system that has allowed us to avoid global conflict since the Second World War, but one that must continually evolve to meet contemporary security challenges. Australia is firmly committed to a rules-based international order that respects international law and respects not only the letter but also the spirit of the Charter.

The challenges facing the international system continue to grow. Today there are more simultaneous crises with a bigger impact on a larger number of people that at any time since the Second World War. Terrorist groups have descended to new depths of brutality. Their use of social media exposes vulnerable young men and women around the world to their hateful propaganda. The brutality of the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant and its claims to territory are an urgent security challenge that we must all confront. The United Nations must respond nimbly and effectively to these crises with the full range of instruments at its disposal, just as it must take concrete steps to prevent new conflicts from emerging.

We are all familiar with the warning signs of conflict, social unrest, displacement and significant human rights violations. The Security Council must use the full weight of its political authority and other preventive tools to address these warning signs as they emerge, including effective use of sanctions to disrupt destabilizing actors and to stem the flow of funds, weapons and fighters that fuel conflict. In responding to conflict, the Security Council must ensure that the United Nations peacekeeping and special political missions have sufficient authority, clarity and direction to carry out well-targeted and achievable mandates, including to improve rule of law and to protect civilians.

The current review of United Nations peacekeeping operations is a welcome opportunity to achieve important reforms. On average, countries emerging from conflict only have a seven-year window to build lasting peace before they risk relapsing into conflict. The United Nations has a central role in preventing this relapse. Strengthening the rule of law is a critical pillar of both conflict prevention and effective post-conflict peacebuilding, and that makes it core business for the Council and United Nations peace operations.

Respect for human rights is of course central to the Charter. Our collective responsibility is the universal promotion, protection and realization of those rights for all, and the knowledge that living in peace and security means we never turn a blind eye to gross and widespread violations of human rights. Sovereignty carries with its fundamental obligations, chief among them the need to protect citizens.

Australia reaffirms its strong commitment to all the principals of the responsibility to protect. We welcome France's initiative on restraint in use of the veto in situations of mass atrocity, and we encourage further progress on this important initiative. The credibility of the United Nations system depends on its willingness and capacity to protect civilians, particularly women and children who suffer disproportionately in conflict.

It is our conviction that the investigation and prosecution of serious international crimes is also critical to establishing lasting peace. Tragically, Rome Statute crimes are committed today in many locations on an alarming scale. It is the duty of every State to exercise its criminal jurisdiction over those responsible for international crimes. The International Criminal Court (ICC), as a court of last resort, has a vital role to play when States are unable or unwilling to act. The ICC deserves the full support of the international community.

As we reaffirm our commitment to the Charter of the United Nations at its seventieth anniversary year we should be able to say its fundamental norms are universally applied, but sadly this is not the case. Key elements of the Charter, including respect for sovereignty and territorial integrity, and of the legal framework of protection for civilians have been persistently defied in recent times, with tragic consequences. The United Nations, this Council and all Member States must continue to be vigilant to ensure these fundamental norms are protected. Only then will the international community be working effectively and collectively to ensure peace and security for all.

The President (*spoke in Chinese*): I now give floor to the representative of Guatemala.

Ms. Bolaños Pérez (Guatemala) (*spoke in Spanish*): Guatemala welcomes China's initiative to hold this important open debate, and we appreciate that Foreign Minister Wang Yi has personally presided over it. We are grateful for the concept note (S/2015/87, annex) that was prepared for this meeting, which certainly invites reflection. We thank Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon for his statement.

We are pleased to take part in this debate, particularly as historical events linked to the creation of the United Nations are being commemorated. Given the loss of so many human lives in conflicts at the global level and the new threats, it is timely for Member States to ask ourselves whether we are realizing the founding promise of the Organization to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war. We would like to make the following comments in that regard.

First, Guatemala attaches the highest importance to the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations. This is not a mere listing of values and general goals. It is the part of the founding instrument of the Organization that justifies its existence and to which we should refer to validate the interpretation of its Articles and to reach a correct political assessment of the actions taken by its Members. The purposes and principles of the Charter also show that international peace and security can be achieved not only through measures of a political nature, such as diplomacy, military means or legal measures designed to prevent, reduce or eliminate conflict. In addition to those, we must adopt measures to empower cooperative and unifying relationships among States.

Secondly, we will not find the road to world peace in the twenty-first century in the principles of non-intervention and by invoking absolute sovereignty. The concept note presents as opposing ideas interfering only when peace and security are truly threatened, and non-interference in internal affairs. Guatemala has experienced both sides of the argument. On the one hand, we strongly defend the principle of non-interference in the internal affairs of States. Nevertheless, we lived through a 36-year internal armed conflict in which mass atrocities were committed. That is why the phrase "Never again!" is especially resonant for us. The principles of sovereignty and non-intervention should not be used as an excuse for non-compliance with international obligations. Rather, Governments have the responsibility to protect their own people. We cannot forget that sovereignty equals responsibility.

Thirdly, maintaining international peace and security also requires strengthening the sole global body responsible for defending them. The Security Council must respect and fulfil the purposes and principles that should guide its work. The international community needs and has the right to an effective and efficient Security Council. All Members of this Organization have given a mandate to this body to act in our name. However, on a number of occasions — for example, the inaction in Syria and on the question of Palestine — the purposes and principles of the Charter and its obligations to the international community have been diminished.

At this time, when an agreement on proposed reforms seems distant, the permanent members can act boldly and make a commitment to the French proposal to regulate the use of the veto in situations involving mass atrocities. The use of the veto must be limited because it has sometimes blocked the prevention or resolution of conflicts, or even fostered impunity. The five permanent members must always provide detailed reasons and motivations behind the use of the veto. This justification should respect the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations.

Fourthly, in a world that is constantly changing, and given the need for rapid and effective solutions, we cannot lose sight of the notion of balance or the value of that concept. Extreme positions have been shown not to work effectively or efficiently to resolve conflict. In many situations, they can create conflicts that are larger than those they are trying to prevent. In evaluating a potential course of action and its possible consequences, two fundamental requirements must be met. On the one hand, timely action is important; on the other, a precautionary approach to the measures to be implemented is also needed.

Guatemala, as a founding Member of the United Nations and champion of democracy and the rule of law, is committed to finding lasting solutions to the scourge of the war. However, in order to ensure that peace is lasting, we need action not only from the Security Council, but from all the main organs of the United Nations and from Member States to build true multilateralism under equal conditions and in accordance with the purposes and principles of the Charter.

The President (*spoke in Chinese*): I now give the floor to the representative of Belgium.

Ms. Frankinet (Belgium) (*spoke in French*): I thank you, Sir, for giving me the floor and for organizing this open debate, which gives us an opportunity to reflect on our shared history and the principles that guide our work for international peace and security. My statement is based on that made of the European Union and that to be delivered by the representative of Austria on behalf of the Group of Friends of the Rule of the Law.

As many have already underscored, 2015 is a special year. We commemorate the seventieth anniversary of the liberation of the Nazi concentration camps and the end of the Second World War. Beyond these commemorations, we will also celebrate the anniversary of the creation of the United Nations and the institutions and mechanisms that the world created to safeguard future generations from the scourge of war. However, conflicts have continued, including genocides, as in Rwanda or Srebrenica. One look at the map of the world is enough to see how fragile international peace and security are, and how important it is to remain fully engaged in the implementation of the objectives and principles of the Charter of the United Nations. Indeed, the Charter enshrines the principles that should guide our actions for peace and international security: respect for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of States, the peaceful settlement of disputes, and non-interference in the internal affairs of States. Seventy years later, we are still implementing those principles selectively. For example, while the European Union was built as a project of peace, today it is witnessing along its borders serious violations of the territorial integrity and sovereignty of Ukraine.

Yet, for many years, we have been working to develop the instruments and mechanisms that would allow us to better prevent and better respond to atrocity crimes and serious violations of human rights. We created the International Criminal Tribunals for the former Yugoslavia and Rwanda, and later the International Criminal Court. We have strengthened the mandates of peacekeeping operations for the protection of civilians, and at the 2005 Summit we unanimously we reaffirmed our responsibility to protect populations from the most serious crimes. In that regard, we have made progress, it is true, in the area of early warning. Belgium welcomes the Secretary-General's Rights Up Front initiative, as well as the establishment, through the Secretary General's Special Advisers on the Prevention of Genocide and for the Responsibility to Protect, of a framework for analysis for the prevention of atrocity crimes.

Despite such progress, the very violent conflicts that we are witnessing today demonstrate the extent to which we need to operationalize the system that we have created. These preventive mechanisms will continue to remain irrelevant if we do not have the political will to use them and to act before it is too late. That is why we must strengthen our resolve to implement at the national, regional and global levels the commitments that we undertook in 1945 and 2005.

The responsibility to protect is rooted in the fundamental principles of the Charter of the United Nations, and is based on a very simple core concept. In the face of genocide, war crimes, crimes against humanity and ethnic cleansing, all human beings have the right to be protected. The responsibility for their own peoples clearly falls first and foremost to Governments; it is incumbent on them to create legitimate and accountable national institutions that serve all citizens, are credible in the eyes of the people, and respect human rights and the rule of law .

Our Governments must all encourage the creation of an environment conducive to mutual respect and resistant to intolerance. Combating hate speech through education and counter-discourse is essential in that regard. Belgium, which currently holds the presidency of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe, will organize the next high-level conference on the theme "Tolerance is stronger than hatred" in Brussels on 8 May. It will highlight how the diversity of our societies is an asset, rather than a risk. Belgium has also developed a new strategy to prevent radicalization.

In that context, it is committed to working for the development of counter-discourse at the national and international levels.

But when a State does not exercise its responsibility to protect its population — wither because it does not want to or because it cannot — the international community cannot remain indifferent and must take action. The Security Council has a special responsibility in that regard, and should be prepared to use all instruments that the Charter has placed at its disposal.

The use of the veto — for example, to block the adoption of resolutions on the situation in Syria — is an unfortunate illustration of the shortfalls of the system and a failure of the Council to shoulder its most fundamental responsibilities. That is why Belgium fully supports France's initiative in favour of a voluntary abstention of the use of the veto with respect to situations involving atrocity crimes. Belgium hopes that the permanent members of the Security Council will be able to agree on a modus operandi in that respect, which we believe would be an important contribution to the ongoing work on United Nations reform.

The President (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): I now give the floor to the representative of Austria.

Mr. Sajdik (Austria): I speak on behalf of the following participants of the Group of Friends of the Rule of Law: Belgium, Costa Rica, the Czech Republic, Denmark, Finland, Germany, Italy, Japan, Latvia, Liechtenstein, Mexico, the Netherlands, Paraguay, the Philippines, the Republic of Korea, Romania, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, and my own country, Austria.

As we reflect on the past 70 years since the founding of the United Nations, it is timely to reaffirm our commitment to all the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations. It is also right to reaffirm our commitment to international law and to upholding democracy and the rule of law, as the concept note (S/2017/87, annex) for this debate suggests. But we will not do so selectively. We reaffirm our commitment to all the purposes and principles enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations, which include the core principles, or three pillars, on which the United Nations is built: peace and security, development and human rights. Firmly based on the universal values of equality, justice, freedom and the dignity and worth of the human person, the Charter places equal importance on the universal respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, as it does on such principles of international law as the prohibition of the threat or use of force, the territorial integrity of States and the peaceful settlement of disputes.

We reaffirm that States shall uphold in good faith the entirety of their obligations arising from the Charter, including under Chapter VII. We call on States to abide by all their obligations under international law, including human rights and international humanitarian law. We reiterate the call on States to ratify and implement multilateral treaties, to settle their disputes peacefully, including through the International Court of Justice, and to cooperate fully with international justice mechanisms, including the International Criminal Court, in order to end impunity

The Security Council has oftentimes confirmed that the rule of law and justice are fundamental building blocks of conflict prevention resolution and of sustainable peace. The Security Council has also, on a number of occasions, recognized that grave human rights violations may constitute a threat to international peace and security. As we reflect on the lessons from our past of wars, conflict and human suffering, we recognize that peace and security and respect for human rights and the rule of law are intrinsically linked. To quote the preamble of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights,

> "it is essential, if man is not to be compelled to have recourse, as a last resort, to rebellion against tyranny and oppression, that human rights should be protected by the rule of law".

As we face new and more complex threats and challenges to international peace and security, and new levels of atrocities, brutality and suffering, we would do well to recall the foundations and principles embodied in the Charter of the United Nations. We emphasize that our collective response to threats to international peace and security must be guided by the rule of law at both the national and international levels. Both are inherently linked and intertwined, for every nation that proclaims the rule of law at home must respect it abroad and every nation that insists on it abroad must enforce it at home.

As participants in the Group of Friends of the Rule of Law, we reaffirm that the rule of law is the foundation of the international system and the basis on which just and fair societies are built, and we will continue to advocate for strengthening the rule of law, inter alia, throughout the elaboration and, later, the implementation of the post-2015 development agenda.

The President (*spoke in Chinese*): I now give the floor to the representative of Algeria.

Mr. Boukadoum (Algeria): I would like to thank China for convening this open debate on such a consequential issue that is directly linked to our commitments to the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations. I commend your initiative and thank you, Mr. President, for the concept note (S/2015/87, annex) that has defined the areas to be explored in that context. Algeria obviously aligns itself with the statement to be made on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement by our colleague from Iran, and I would like to add the following comments.

Algeria is of the firm view that it is high time for the United Nations to reflect on how the Organization and the Security Council should adhere more efficiently to their mandate, missions and the great expectations that the Charter and the community of nations have placed on their shoulders. Seventy years have gone by since the inception of the United Nations, but while its methods have barely evolved, the world has in the meantime undergone a complete metamorphosis. In addition to the long-standing, everlasting threats to international peace and security, other challenges of a different nature are putting pressure on an already overburdened Security Council agenda. Terrorism in its different forms, threats of genocide and diseases that know no borders are hindering the security of nations and the safety of citizens. Needless to say, the pitiless shadow of continuous and perilous conflicts and the threat of weapons of mass destruction still cast a baneful shadow over the whole of humankind. We believe that the questions to be addressed are the following ones.

How can we improve the efficiency of the United Nations system, and specifically of the Security Council, while always bearing in mind the goals, purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations, that all of us deem profoundly valid? The rule of law, openness, democracy, dialogue, peaceful settlement of disputes and the very principles enshrined in the first article of the Charter should be the guiding rod.

How can we use these reflections to define the operative tracks for the next 70 years of the Organization? One cannot ignore the fact that unfulfilled promises and unaddressed expectations might undermine the confidence of the whole world in the United Nations. We have to fully understand that the world has radically changed during the past 70 years, but the Security Council and its interaction with other organs have barely evolved. The Security Council has not adapted itself either to a global constituency that has increased, or to the necessity to adapt its working methods. In that regard, I would like to say the following.

First, the membership of 15 States does not reflect today's world. Secondly, its working methods, including transparency, ought to be improved. Thirdly, the use of veto power is not compatible with the open societies that we look forward to building, and obviously Algeria welcomes the ideas aimed at limiting its application, as a first step. Fourthly, we should reflect on ideas and methods, not only to react to conflicts, but also certainly to prevent and forestall new ones. Conflict prevention and peacebuilding should be as important as peacekeeping. We look forward and we expect the Council to strengthen as far and firmly as possible its ties, bonds and interaction with regional organizations and countries that are engaged in mediations and conflict-solving endeavours.

Algeria also believes that Chapter VI and Chapter VIII of the Charter ought to be privileged in many circumstances. We are also of the view that the Council could and should create organs that might help in fulfilling necessary tasks such as inquiries, fact-finding missions or information that could help perform the tasks of the Security Council.

Finally, Algeria strongly believes that the responsibility of the General Assembly should not be forgotten and must be respected in accordance with the mission bestowed by the Charter of the United Nations.

The President (*spoke in Chinese*): I give the floor to the representative of Israel.

Mr. Prosor (Israel): Seventy years ago, representatives of 50 nations met in San Francisco to draw up the Charter of the newly formed United Nations. President Truman addressed the conference, saying,

> "With this Charter the world can begin to look forward to the time when all worthy human beings may be permitted to live decently as free people."

The signatories believed that every man and woman on this Earth has dignity and rights. After witnessing the ravages of two world wars in the span of a generation, they understood that freedom is never free. It is not enough to write a charter or give a speech; freedom must be fought for.

Article 1 of the Charter of the United Nations outlines the institution's four purposes. The first is to maintain international peace and security and take effective measures for the prevention and removal of threats to peace.

The greatest threat to global security is posed by radical Islamist groups like Hamas, Hizbullah, Al-Qaida, the Islamic State in Iraq and the Sham (ISIS) and Boko Haram. The battle being waged against these groups is the battle between civility and barbarism, between pluralistic and totalitarian societies, between tyranny and freedom. Day by day, extremism is spreading its ugly tentacles and, in the process, destabilizing communities and nations. The threat is obvious and it is growing, and yet the Security Council has been reluctant to take decisive action. Worse, it has on occasion surrendered to those nations that harbour, fund and support terrorist groups.

On 28 January, Hizbullah terrorists fired anti-tank missiles at an Israel Defense Forces vehicle in northern Israel, killing two Israeli soldiers and injuring seven others. Hizbullah immediately claimed responsibility for the attack. One would think that in light of this clear admission of guilt, the Security Council would immediately and unequivocally condemn Hizbullah. Yet it took an entire week to release a statement that did not even mention the terrorist group. If we intend to fight terror, we must not differentiate between tenor and terror; there is no good terror or bad terror group, and we must treat them all alike.

Hizbullah has held Lebanon hostage for the better part of three decades and now seems intent on holding the Security Council hostage as well. Thanks to the backroom dealings of its Iranian patron, Hizbullah has been allowed to continue its reign of terror. Here in the theatre of the absurd, it would not surprise me if ISIS was given a starring role on the Human Rights Council. Let me be clear — this institution cannot claim to uphold international security while indulging those nations that are actively undermining peace and security.

The second purpose of the Charter of the United Nations is to advance relations among nations based on respect for the principle of equal rights. If we are honest with ourselves then we will admit that we have not done enough to defend basic freedoms. One example is the Middle East. Across the Middle East, repressive regimes seek to control what people think, how they are educated, whom they can love and what they believe. For 2,000 years, Christian communities dotted the landscape of the Middle East. Today that figure has dwindled to less than 10 per cent. We saw an example of such brutal persecution just last week when ISIS beheaded 21 Egyptian Coptic Christians in Libya.

But it is not just Christians who are being persecuted; all minority groups are at risk. As we speak, Yazidis, Baha'i, Kurds, Christians and Muslims are being executed and expelled by radical extremists at a rate of 1,000 people per month. Extremists have unleashed a plague of persecution, believing that by silencing individuals, they can silence civilization. Nobel Prize winner and humanitarian activist Elie Wiesel has said that

> "wherever men and women are persecuted because of their race, religion, or political views, that place must — at that moment — become the centre of the universe".

Millions of men and women look to us to defend their dignity and their rights and we are simply not doing enough to help them.

The third purpose of the Charter is to promote and encourage respect for human rights. The primary body responsible for upholding this principle is the Human Rights Council. Members of the Council currently include Saudi Arabia, Qatar, Algeria and Venezuela. I imagine there is not a person in this Chamber who would want to be placed on trial in one of those countries. And I would think that no one here would be willing to write an article criticizing one of these Governments while living under its dominion, certainly not if she valued her liberty and her life. Yet these and other human rights offenders are given leadership roles in this institution. In 2008, for example, Saudi Arabia — a regime notorious for public executions, lashings and beheadings — was elected the Special Rapporteur of the General Assembly's Third Committee, dealing with human rights.

The fact of the matter is that this institution has been hijacked. The ruthless autocracies that jail journalists rush to lecture us on the virtues of a free press. The repressive dictatorships that persecute political opponents filibuster on the sanctity of free and fair elections. And mass-murdering tyrannical regimes preach to us about human rights. Yet instead of criticizing these regimes, the very nations that undermine international peace get elected to the United Nations bodies responsible for maintaining global security. In 2013, the General Assembly elected Iran to the United Nations committee that deals with disarmament and international security. This is like inviting North Korea to write a resolution on cybersecurity.

But the absurdity does not end there. Last year, Iran was elected to serve as Vice-Chair of the United Nations Legal Committee — an unusual choice given that Iranian citizens are denied due process and fair trials. It is remarkable that Iran is so active in international affairs given that its citizens are not afforded opportunities to participate in Iranian national affairs.

The fourth and final purpose of the Charter is to be a centre for harmonizing the actions of nations. You, Sir, convened this debate to reaffirm international commitment to the principles outlined in the Charter of the United Nations. The Charter speaks about the United Nations as a centre for harmonizing the actions of nations, but the only harmony I hear is the chorus of condemnations aimed at Israel. This institution will never live up to the principles in its Charter so long as it persistently, consistently and insistently focuses on Israel. Last year, the General Assembly adopted 20 resolutions singling out Israel for condemnation and only three resolutions to protest the actions of all other nations combined.

The worst humanitarian crisis of our generation is taking place in Syria, where 200,000 men, women, and children have been murdered by a regime that employs torture, starvation, chemical weapons and barrel bombs. And yet the General Assembly adopted just one resolution (resolution 68/182) condemning the brutal Syrian regime. Since 2006, more than half of all resolutions adopted by the Human Rights Council in criticism of a particular country have been directed at Israel. This is not logical and it is not moral; it is simply prejudice. When the actions of the United Nations are placed against the yardstick of its Charter, the institution simply does not measure up. We are failing those who need us most.

Last night, Hollywood celebrated the Oscars, and as millions tuned in, the following thoughts occurred to me. If the Oscars for maintenance of international peace and security were given at the United Nations, I would not be surprised if these candidates were awarded prizes. In the Best Actor Category — for acting like a peace-loving country while developing nuclear capabilities, denying the Holocaust and threatening the destruction of another Member State, the Oscar goes to Iran. In the category for Best Supporting Actor — for its unrelenting support to the Al-Assad regime in killing hundreds of thousands civilians, the Oscar goes to Hizbullah. In the category for Best Visual Effects — for making women disappear from the public squares, the Oscar goes to — surprise, surprise —Saudi Arabia. There was no competition. And finally, for rewriting history, the Oscar for Best Editing goes to the Palestinian Authority. But the truth is that the Palestinian Authority has already received enough prizes from this institution.

Putting the Oscars aside, if we want to pursue peace and security in the real world, it is time to bring down the curtain on this theatre of the absurd and return the original values of the Charter of the United Nations back to centre stage.

The President (*spoke in Chinese*): I recall that the time limit for statements is four minutes.

I give the floor to the representative of Japan.

Mr. Yoshikawa (Japan): Seventy years ago, the United Nations was created for the purposes and principles enumerated in the Charter: the maintenance of peace and security, the rule of law, respect for human rights and the self-determination of peoples. Upholding these purposes and principles of the Charter, the world body has made important contributions. Placing high importance on the role played by the United Nations, Japan has come a long way together with the United Nations.

Japan expresses its highest appreciation for the work of the United Nations in maintaining the peace and security of the international community. At the same time, when we look at the world's current situation, people are still suffering from conflicts, poverty and human rights violations. This reminds us there is an even greater need to be united in order to tackle threats common to us all. In view of these circumstances and given that this year marks the seventieth anniversary of the United Nations it is important for us to reaffirm that all the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations are equally important as we head towards the future. I therefore welcome the holding of today's open debate and express my gratitude to you, Mr. President. I also thank the Secretary-General for his briefing.

Throughout its post-war history Japan has, based on feelings of deep remorse regarding the Second World War and by upholding all the purposes and principles of the Charter, walked the path of a peace-loving nation that contributes to the peace and security of the world while consistently respecting freedom, democracy, the rule of law and human rights. Since becoming a Member of the United Nations, Japan has made assiduous efforts to contribute to the peace and prosperity of the world. That is a reflection of the genuine desire of my country to dedicate itself faithfully and actively to promoting the ideas and objectives enshrined in the Charter.

We place particular importance on the principle stipulated in the Charter that international disputes shall be settled by peaceful means, based on international law and not by force or coercion. In this context, Japan fully associates itself with the statement delivered by the Permanent Representative of Austria on behalf of more than 20 countries from the Group of Friends on the Rule of Law. Japan has made great efforts to fully comply with international law and we are proud of our record. Japan is committed to every international tribunal, including the International Court of Justice, the International Tribunal for the Law of the Sea and the International Criminal Court. We have made significant and constructive contributions for their better use and universalization.

At the same time, if the Organization is to deal effectively with the ever-changing realities of the international community, the United Nations, including the Security Council, must consistently reform and strengthen itself. The seventieth anniversary of the foundation of this world body should be a golden opportunity for us to renew our resolve to redouble our efforts to this effect. Japan will continue with its endeavours to achieve concrete results, together with an overwhelming majority of Member States calling for reform.

Peace, democracy and human rights now constitute an inherent part of the identity of the Japanese people. That is proven by the fact that, based on feelings of deep remorse regarding the Second World War, our people have endeavoured for 70 years to build a free and democratic nation respecting fundamental human rights and the rule of law. Japan has walked the path of a peace-loving nation and has made significant contributions to the peace, development and democratization of the world. The path we have taken so far is the pride of Japanese people and will never change.

Since the inception of the United Nations, history has shown how important all the purposes and principles of the Charter are to us. I should like to end my statement by reaffirming Japan's determination to continue on its path as a peace-loving nation together with the United Nations. We will do so in order to that the purposes and principles of the United Nations Charter are duly crystallized in the actual world. My full text will be circulated.

The President (*spoke in Chinese*): I now give the floor to the representative of Estonia.

Mr. Kolga (Estonia): First I should like to thank you, Mr. President, for convening this open debate on maintaining international peace and security. The seventieth anniversary of the United Nations provides us with a unique opportunity to reflect on and reaffirm the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations. By the same token, I should like to offer you our best wishes for the beginning of the Year of the Goat.

Estonia aligns itself with the statement delivered earlier by the observer of the European Union and with the statement that will be delivered later by the representative of Maldives on behalf of the Accountability, Coherence and Transparency group.

Although there is much good to say and successes to remember about 70 years of United Nations existence, as time is short I will comment on only some pending issues for the future. With regard to the topic of today's discussion, I should like to reiterate that the protection of human life is the foremost priority that we as the international community — we the peoples — have been given. Carrying out this mandate of the Security Council should be clear and understandable to us all. In the Charter of the United Nations, the permanent members of the Security Council were given great power but also great responsibility to maintain peace and security in the world. The three most important principles that should be adhered to while maintaining peace and security in our view are democracy, the rule of law and the fight against impunity. I hope that all the members of the Council are and will be guided by those principles.

Considering the large number of crises throughout the world and their disastrous consequences for civilian populations in Syria, Ukraine, the Middle East, Somalia and South Sudan, to name but a few, it is clear that the Security Council has not always lived up to its tasks. Several attempts to adopt resolutions on an effective international response to end crises and ensure accountability for perpetrators of atrocity crimes have been blocked by permanent members of the Security Council. Far too often, history has shown us how the distinct privilege of the veto, or even just the threat of using it, has been abused, leaving the Security Council paralysed and passive on the sidelines in situations where it is most needed.

The saddest example of that is the four-year long, ongoing humanitarian catastrophe in Syria. Estonia therefore stands by the French proposal to establish a code of conduct on the voluntary restraint on the use of the veto and firmly believes that taking such a step would help the Security Council to live up to its mandate. The Security Council can and should make its contribution to the protection of fundamental human rights through its power of referring situations to the International Criminal Court.

From the perspective of the working methods of the Council, one aspect that needs to be taken into consideration is the obligation deriving from Article 27 of the Charter, which establishes the only limitation to a Council member participating in a vote in the Security Council, to wit: "in decisions under Chapter VI, and under paragraph 3 of Article 52, a party to a dispute shall abstain from voting". This applies in equal measure to all Council members and should be adhered to.

Furthermore, while focusing on the Council's role in the maintenance of peace and security in the world, one cannot ignore the seriously deteriorated security situation in Europe. The conflict in Ukraine has shown that one of the basic principles of international law — respect for a country's territorial integrity and sovereignty, and for the inviolability of its borders — can be breached. We, the peoples of the United Nations, should not tolerate it. With the occupation and illegal annexation of Crimea that we do not recognize, and the ongoing military intervention in eastern Ukraine, one permanent member of the Security Council has violated international law and the underlying principles of European security, including those enshrined in the Helsinki Final Act and Paris Charter. Despite those violations, however, these principles are still valid and must be fully respected. The independence, sovereignty and territorial inviolability must remain the fundamental right of States and nations.

Last but not least, on the broader spectrum of the United Nations, Member States can make their own contributions to the maintenance of peace and security by strongly adhering to the rule of law, which also encourages sustainable development as progress is best guaranteed by good governance, transparency of decision-making processes and the minimization of corruption. Estonia firmly believes that loyalty to the rule of law is a tool to improve the fundamental human right of access to justice, which is inherently linked to the promotion of a culture of accountability over impunity and to wider security and stability.

The President (*spoke in Chinese*): I now give the floor to the representative of the Syrian Arab Republic.

Mr. Ja'afari (Syrian Arab Republic) (*spoke in Arabic*): Let me at the outset congratulate you, Mr. President, on presiding over the Council for this month. I also welcome the presence of Mr. Wang Yi, Minister for Foreign Affairs of China, at this meeting and thank him for convening this debate.

Let me reaffirm the following points. The first is the importance of strict compliance with the principles of the Charter. At the top of this list is respect for the sovereignty of States, their territorial integrity, legality, sovereignty, the peaceful settlement of international disputes and non-interference in the internal affairs of other States. That is the sole approach that anchors the rule of law on the international scene. Respect for international peace and security guarantees development and strengthens cordial relations among Member States.

Secondly, the experience of the past seven decades underlines the need to respect and comply with the Charter and to reform certain working methods of the Security Council. There is also a need to strengthen other working methods so that the United Nations can be in a position to play the role entrusted to it by Member States and to preserve its effectiveness.

Throughout its history, the United Nations has had to deal with actions of certain influential States seeking to impose their hegemony over the Organization and make use of it for their own interests and policies without paying the slightest attention to the contradictions of their policies with the principles and purposes of the Charter or the interests of other

Member States. When the founders of the Organization drafted the Charter, they opened it with "We the peoples of the United Nations", but we see current practice as an attempt to change this wording to "We, certain influential States of the United Nations". We have seen this very clearly since the very inception of the United Nations, which has been paralysed and remains so because of the policies of certain of these influential States, and is unable to take the necessary measures under the Charter to implement many of its resolutions of international legitimacy, particularly those calling for an end to the Israel occupation of the Syrian Golan and other occupied Arab territories, and for Israel to end its aggressive policies and racist crimes against Arab citizens living under occupation in the States of the region.

That is also very clear when the Charter is flouted by double-standard policies. New terminology, new principles and new concepts have emerged to circumbent the Charter and international law, such as the protection of civilians. This concept that does not enjoy full international support and has been used to justify colonialist, bloody, military interventions in certain areas, for example in Iraq and Libya, which are now dealing with chaos and terrorism. It is also used to impose illegal unilateral measures against certain States, including Syria.

Thirdly, the United States, which won the Second World War and defeated fascism and racism, must now work seriously and sincerely on the civilian and military fronts to address the terrorist tidal wave represented by international terrorist groups linked Al-Qaida, such as the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL), the Al-Nusra Front and their offspring in Syria and Iraq, which are supported from outside. We see this in Boko Haram, the Movement of East Turkestan, the Caucasus Emirate, Ansar al-Sharia, Al-Shabaab, and others. Syria reaffirms in this respect that all efforts aimed at putting an end to terrorism will be successful only if we stick to the principles of the Charter and international law and cooperate with the Governments and institutions of the States involved, since certain States make use of terrorism as a tool for international policies, and only if we stop ignoring the fact that others actually practise terrorism.

The situation in Syria and other States of the region demonstrates the deplorable state the United Nations is in. Since the initial days of the crisis — and we are now in its fifth year — certain States have used this forum to intervene flagrantly in the internal affairs of Syria and worked relentlessly to provoke, spread lies, demonize the Syrian Government, exacerbate the crisis and support terrorism in all its forms, as well as to block efforts to achieve a settlement, destabilize Syria and undermine its policies and its strategic, national sovereign choices in order to promote regime change through force and terrorism. Certain States have also sought to impose unilateral measures against the Syrian people and to lay the groundwork and find excuses for military intervention on the basis of falsehoods, as we saw in the Libyan experience. The brotherly Libyan people and the whole world continue to see the disastrous effects of such an approach, without hearing the least apology from those who responsible for these deadly destructive and serious actions. We see no enlightenment or change in their disastrous policies, which have heaped shame upon them and bled our peoples.

The situation does not stop there. Certain influential States members of the Council have worked to guide their puppet regimes in the region and encouraged them to gather terrorists, criminals, foreign mercenaries and bloodthirsty Takfiris from throughout the world, to finance and arm them, and send them to Syria and Iraq to establish their pseudo-State and make Syria a new base for their terrorism against the rest of the world. The Turkish regime has gone further still. Just yesterday morning, it carried out an aggression on Syrian territory when hundreds of soldiers and armoured divisions from Turkey made an incursion into Syrian territory. That aggression demonstrates Turkish intentions to expand into the region and the depth of the relationship between the Turkish regime and the terrorist group ISIL.

Where are the promises made by those States, when they joined the United Nations, to live together in peace and in relations of good-neighbourliness? Where is their respect for the principles of international law concerning friendly relations and cooperation among States, set out in General Assembly resolution 2625 (XXV) of 1970? How can the representatives of these influential countries who have spoken today explain these violations? Why is the Security Council unable to condemn these practices?

I have with me today a 500-page document that includes the names of thousands of foreign terrorists who were killed in October 2013 alone. Hundreds of those were nationals of Council members. We are talking about realities and we feel deep pain. Thousands are being killed in Syria, Iraq and other States in the context of the inertia of the so-called international community and its inability to bring to account the masterminds of international terrorism. If the United Nations is not compelled to respect the principles of the Charter and international law, it will have lost its moral quality and will have become a weapon for the strongest against the weakest.

In response to the statement made by the representative of the United States, who is a specialist in international law, need I remind her that the Pentagon's training of mercenaries in Saudi Arabia, Qatar and Turkey to deal with Syria is a flagrant violation of the principles of the Charter and prohibited under resolutions 2170 (2014), 2178 (2014), 2195 (2014), and 2199 (2015)?

The President (*spoke in Chinese*): I should like to remind all speakers that statements should be limited to four minutes; otherwise the President will have to stop the speaker.

I now give the floor to the representative of South Africa.

Mr. Mminele (South Africa): We thank the delegation of the People's Republic of China for organizing today's open debate on the topic "Maintenance of international peace and security: reflect on history, reaffirm the strong commitment to the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations". My delegation welcomes this debate as it extends to the very core of the strategic objectives of South Africa's foreign policy, namely, the protection of territorial integrity, sovereignty and enhancing respect for the provisions of international law.

South Africa associates itself with the statement delivered by the representative of Mozambique on behalf of the African Union as well as the representative of Zimbabwe on behalf of the Southern African Development Community, and we wish to make the following additional remarks in our national capacity.

It was almost 70 years ago, in 1945, when the Charter of the United Nations was introduced to the global community. One of the most pertinent articles, which is relevant to this debate and to the Organization's future existence is Article 2.1, which notes that "The Organization is based on the principle of the sovereign equality of all its Members". That is self-explanatory in all its pronouncements.

That provision prohibits all use of force against another State unless that use of force is one of the limited exceptions provided by international law — such as military action in self-defence and military action taken as authorized by the Security Council — or has become part of customary international law binding all States. The actions of Governments that are not consistent with this provision show an unacceptable disregard for international law and the key principles of State sovereignty and territorial integrity.

South Africa would like to reaffirm the importance of prioritizing the attainment of the African Union (AU) Peace and Security Architecture in all parts of Africa through the collective efforts of the member countries. In this regard, we encourage the Security Council to deepen its relationship with regional and subregional organizations at the institutional level. We further welcome the ongoing efforts to improve the institutional relations between the United Nations and the AU characterized mainly by the good working relations between the secretariats of the two organs. The United Nations representative office in Addis Ababa is an invaluable conduit through which greater policy coherence between the United Nations and the AU can be achieved.

On our continent, the norms underpinning the African Union peace and security regime resonate directly with the Charter of the United Nations. That stance is reflected in the African Union Constitutive Act and the AU Protocol Relating to the Establishment of the Peace and Security Council. Both these doctrines assign high priority to the sovereignty and territorial integrity of its member States. At the same time it should be noted that although the AU Constitutive Act does acknowledge that a State has the principal responsibility for protecting its citizens, the AU has the right to intervene for human protection purposes. As noted in article 4 (h) of the Constitutive Act, the Union has the right to intervene in a member State pursuant to a decision of the Assembly in respect of grave circumstances, namely war crimes, genocide and crimes against humanity.

The AU has adapted and reformed according to changing circumstances and realisms. My delegation calls on this body to do the same and adapt to present-day realities. We however appreciate the efforts undertaken by the United Nations to review the peacebuilding architecture and a comprehensive assessment of the state of United Nations peace operations. This for us is an important step towards addressing the changing nature of conflict.

On the protection of civilians, we wish to underline that it remains the primary responsibility of States to protect civilians within their borders. Accountability must first and foremost be sought at the national level. Failing that, the international community has a collective responsibility to act using mechanisms at its disposal including independent fact-finding commissions and commissions of inquiry. We would also reiterate that Member States should commit governing and principles of the United Nations Charter, as well as to basic norms governing international relations. States should also commit themselves to the noble cause of maintaining international peace and security, promoting fairness and justice to prevent conflict from erupting.

In conclusion, the fact that this open debate comes in the year that marks the seventieth anniversary of the founding of the United Nations is highly significant to my delegation, as South Africa's expectations are clearly defined regarding movement towards meaningful reform of this organ, which at present remains unrepresentative and has not conformed to global realities. South Africa remains committed to the Ezulwini Consensus, on which African countries speak with one voice for Security Council reform. Africa calls for the expansion of the Security Council in both the permanent and non-permanent categories from 15 to 26 seats, with Africa getting no less than 2 permanent seats and 5 non-permanent seats.

As the Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations continues to deliberate on matters that directly affect the peacekeepers, I should like to conclude by commending all personnel involved in peacekeeping missions as well as civil society groups for the service they perform.

The President (*spoke in Chinese*): I now give the floor to the representative of Kazakhstan.

Mr. Abdrakhmanov (Kazakhstan): I thank the Chinese presidency for convening this meeting, which makes us reaffirm our commitment to the Charter of the United Nations. This year, we usher in the seventieth anniversary of the United Nations and the transformational post-2015 phase. We realize the absolute unparalleled importance of the United Nations as the only universal Organization in the world that can address pressing issues of regional and global security and provide concerted momentum for sustainable development.

Being a responsible, supportive and highly engaged State Member of the United Nations has been one of the highest priorities of my country's foreign policy. Kazakhstan sees the Charter, the conventions and the legal instruments as a guideline for its work at the United Nations for maintaining peace and security, sustainable development and humanitarian action. We share with others the deep conviction that the fundamental principles of the Charter emphasizing the sovereign equality of States, the rule of law in international relations, non-interference in internal affairs and respect for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of States, together with the peaceful settlement of disputes, are more relevant than ever. Our commitment to multilateral diplomacy, mutual trust, confidence-building and international fairness and justice must therefore be unfailing with an honest, impartial and balanced brokerage.

Kazakhstan has endeavoured over 23 years to develop friendly relations with all States. We have learned from our experience that all countries, large and small, need protection and should have their voices heard in the Security Council and other United Nations bodies on international policies of peace and security, as well as sustainable development. That is because of the close nexus between the two, acknowledging that without peace there can be no development and vice versa.

As for the component of development, global cooperation and partnerships with an outreach to support Africa, the land-locked developing countries, least developed countries and small island developing States (SIDS) in areas of nuclear, food, energy and water security — and especially climate change mitigation for SIDS — will promote social progress and better standards of life in larger basic freedom for all.

The tasks before us can be effectively achieved if all the principal organs of the United Nations — the General Assembly, the Security Council, the Economic and Social Council, the International Court of Justice and the Secretariat — work in close cooperation with the specialized agencies and regional organizations. The good offices of the Secretary-General and his Special Envoys, as listed in the Charter, should also be availed of to the fullest.

The Charter gives the Security Council primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security. In fulfilling this mandate it must adopt judiciously a range of measures, including the establishment of United Nations peacekeeping operations. The comprehensive and hybrid nature of peacekeeping operations today call for greater global solidarity to meet unprecedented challenges and must be in consultation with the troop-contributing and host countries.

Force must be used only as a last resort when all attempts at diplomacy and negotiation have failed and must be so done if authorized by the Council. We also abide by the basic directives of human dignity and fundamental human rights of both men and women. The protection of civilians, especially women and children, is an imperative, with a halt to all forms of gender violence and impunity.

If preventing succeeding generations from the scourge of war was the main motivation for creating the United Nations, then Kazakhstan had the moral courage to close down in 1991 its nuclear-weapon test site in Semipalatinsk, the second largest in the world, and renounced its nuclear arsenal, the fourth largest in the world. Along with other countries in our region, the Central Asian nuclear-weapon-free zone was established as a means of regional and global security. My country is presently working with stakeholders on a universal declaration for the achievement of a nuclear-weapon-free world to make our world safer.

To conclude, Kazakhstan remains steadfast in its pledge to be part of the multilateral action to uphold the highest principles of the Charter of the United Nations.

The President (*spoke in Chinese*): I now give the floor to the representative of Italy.

Mr. Lambertini (Italy): I thank you, Mr. President, for convening this important open debate. Italy aligns itself with the statement made by the observer of the European Union and wishes to add some remarks in its national capacity.

This debate could not be more timely. This year marks not only the seventieth anniversary of the Organization, but also the sixtieth anniversary of Italy's membership in the United Nations. We are strongly committed to the Organization and to the maintenance of international peace and security, as set out in Article 1 of the Charter. We express that commitment as the top contributor of troops to the United Nations among Western countries; the seventh contributor to the regular peacekeeping budget of the Organization; and the proud host country of the United Nations agencies in Italy, including the food and agricultural hub in Rome, the Brindisi logistics base, and the United Nations Staff College in Turin.

"Building peace for a better tomorrow" is the motto that accompanies the logo of our Security Council bid. Peacekeeping, peacebuilding and creating conditions for a better life globally are the cornerstones of our United Nations action and will continue to guide our future commitment. Yet, as our daily tweets remind us all too often, our efforts are constantly challenged by old and new threats that demand from us a renewed and strengthened multilateral partnership. While we may have different views on the nature of these threats and how best to address them, I am sure we can all agree that today's threats to peace and security are complex and know no boundaries. From terrorism to climate change; from the need to protect public global goods to the eradication of poverty; from fighting Ebola to tackling major international crises, including in the Mediterranean, the Organization is called upon to act effectively and inclusively.

The growing complexity and costs of crisis management lead us to believe that greater efforts should be dedicated to conflict prevention and mediation. Preventive diplomacy and mediation should be seen not only as a moral imperative but also as a strategic investment to create more stable environments and better economic and social conditions. We need to shift from reaction to action, from fixing to prevention. From this perspective we should enhance the United Nations early warning mechanisms and increase our collective capacity to provide an effective and timely response to arising conflicts. Partnerships with regional organizations should be strengthened to improve our understanding of local realities. We support the work of the Department for Political Affairs especially in this area. We have also helped to set up the Framework of Analysis for Atrocity Crimes of the Office on Genocide Prevention, which we consider to be a priority.

Devoting more human and financial resources to conflict prevention and peacebuilding through understanding and confidence-building is a good investment. Global conflict prevention also depends on respect for the rule of law and meaningful mechanisms of accountability for the most serious crimes under international law. The Rome Statute of the International

Criminal Court thus represents the cornerstone of what should become an integrated system of accountability that can assure the end of impunity for perpetrators of war crimes, crimes against humanity and genocide. And it is the job of the Security Council in that respect to ensure that there is follow-up to the calls for accountability.

"Peace cannot be kept by force. It can be achieved only by understanding." These are the words of Albert Einstein. Understanding, listening, preventing and mediating should be our tools of choice in pursuing the purposes of the Charter. The multiple sources of instability require multiple sources of action using the necessary tools and stakeholders to address the threats we face.

Italy is ready to do its part. Back in 1992, Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali spoke of the Italian formula as an original mix of institutional and non-institutional approaches to brokering a peace agreement. He was referring to the experience in Mozambique and the peace agreement signed in Rome, with the involvement of a prominent Italian non-governmental organization, the Community of Sant'Egidio. Some 20 years later, the Italian formula is still relevant. In the Mediterranean we are all aware of the importance of understanding, listening and mediating to prevent rather than react to crises in complex situations and we apply this approach through multilateral channels. This Italian formula applies first and foremost to our peacekeeping missions where the use of the most recent technologies goes hand in hand with the close involvement of civil society. In the same spirit, Italy promotes respect for human rights with an inclusive and balanced approach, taking into account all of the different positions.

The maintenance of international peace and security requires a holistic approach that addresses the complexities of the international scenario. The year 2015 could be a year of action. The review of peace operations, the peacebuilding architecture review and the high-level review of resolution 1325 (2000) will be keys to that end. The international community is also formulating a new definition of sustainable development that integrates the economic, social and environmental dimensions. It is also tasked with mobilizing all available resources to finance the new agenda and with reaching a universal agreement on climate change. These three important steps will define our collective action and our ability to tackle the root causes of instability, inequality and uncertainty. In this context, I should like to recall that in a little more than two months Expo Milano 2015 will officially open, focusing on food security and nutrition to promote sustainable ways to feed the planet.

I conclude by reaffirming our strong commitment to our joint efforts against terrorism. Ten days ago, Italy co-sponsored resolution 2199 (2015) to combat the funding of terrorist groups. We affirm our contribution to this effort and our condemnation of all acts of terrorism. After hearing the reference made by some delegations to Security Council reform, I should like to stress that merit and not privilege should be our idea for the bedrock of a new Security Council. That is the challenge that all Member States should address while reaffirming their commitment to the maintenance of international peace and security.

The President (*spoke in Chinese*): I now give the floor to the representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran.

Mr. Khoshroo (Islamic Republic of Iran): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM). I wish to convey to you, Mr. President, the Movement's appreciation for convening this open debate on such a fundamental issue. We hope this open debate will contribute to our overall efforts to make the United Nations more efficient and effective in maintaining international peace and security as well as being more transparent, democratic and consistent.

As always and at the time of the seventieth anniversary of the Organization, NAM consistently calls upon the international community to renew its commitment to uphold and defend the principles of the Charter of the United Nations and international law, as well as the means provided in the Charter for the peaceful settlement of disputes and non-resort to the threat or use of force. These are essential in preserving and promoting peace and security, the rule of law, economic development and social progress, and human rights for all.

NAM member States note that the new and emerging threats and challenges, including the multiple interrelated and mutually reinforcing current global crises, continue to impede efforts by States to attain greater economic development and social progress, peace and security and the enjoyment of human rights and the rule of law. Global peace and security continue to elude humankind due to, inter alia, an increasing tendency by certain States to resort to unilateral measures and shirk their obligations — especially concerning weapons of mass destruction and conventional weapons treaties — terrorism, conflicts and violations of human rights and international humanitarian law. Moreover, the use of double standards in international relations and the continuing failure on the part of the majority of developed countries to fulfil their socioeconomic commitments are also undermining peace and security. We underscore the need for the international community to collectively redress those situations according to the Charter of the United Nations and the principles of international law.

NAM member States, guided by the Movement's principled positions and recognizing the serious threat and danger posed by actions and measures seeking to undermine international law and international legal instruments, stress the need to undertake a wide range of measures. Among others, they include identifying and pursuing measures appropriate to achieving a peaceful and prosperous world and a just and equitable world order based on the Charter of the United Nations and international law; conducting external relations based on the ideals, principles and purposes of the Movement, the Charter of the United Nations and international law and the relevant resolutions adopted by the General Assembly; firmly opposing unilateral evaluations and certifications of the conduct of States as a means of exerting pressure on non-aligned countries and other developing countries; refraining from recognizing, adopting or implementing extra-territorial or unilateral coercive measures or laws, including unilateral economic sanctions, other intimidating measures and arbitrary travel restrictions that seek to exert pressure on non-aligned countries, thereby threatening their sovereignty and independence and their freedom of trade and investment and preventing them from exercising their right to decide, through their own free will, their own political, economic and social systems, where such measures or laws constitute flagrant violations of the Charter of the United Nations, international law, the multilateral trading system as well as the norms and principles governing friendly relations among States; and opposing and condemning the categorization of countries as good or evil based on unilateral and unjustified criteria and adopting a doctrine of pre-emptive attack, including attack with nuclear weapons by certain States, which is inconsistent with international law, in particular the international legally binding instruments concerning nuclear disarmament.

Finally, the Movement has stressed that the Charter of the United Nations includes sufficient provisions regarding the use of force to maintain and preserve international peace and security, and that efforts by the Council to achieve that goal should be strictly conducted in full conformity with the relevant provisions of the Charter. Resorting to the use of Chapter VII of the Charter as an umbrella in addressing issues that pose no threat to international peace and security must be avoided. In that regard, the Council should fully utilize the relevant Charter provisions, where appropriate, including Chapters VI and VIII. In addition, consistent with United Nations practice and international law, as pronounced by the International Court of Justice, Article 51 of the Charter of the United Nations is restrictive and should not be rewritten or reinterpreted.

The President (*spoke in Chinese*): I now give the floor to the representative of Zimbabwe.

Mr. Shava (Zimbabwe): As this is the first time I take the floor in the Security Council this month, allow me to congratulate you, Mr. President, on your assumption of the presidency of the Council for the month of February. I also wish to convey the appreciation of the Southern African Development Community (SADC) to you for convening this open debate, which provides us with an opportunity to reaffirm our strong commitment to the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations, at a time when we are looking forward to celebrating the seventieth anniversary of the founding of the United Nations.

I would also like to thank Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon for his briefing, and all of the Foreign Ministers who have enriched the debate by personally attending and delivering statements on this very important subject.

SADC associates itself with the statement delivered by the representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement.

SADC recognizes the fact that the world has undergone profound changes over the past decade as new threats to international peace and security have continued to emerge. The Charter of the United Nations provides the basic framework for the peaceful conduct of relations between States. The purposes and principles of the Charter should continue to guide us in the maintenance of international peace and security and in the pursuit of the common good of all our nations.

Experience has shown that upholding the principles of the sovereign equality of States, respect for sovereignty and territorial integrity, the peaceful settlement of disputes and non-interference in the internal affairs of States fosters a global environment conducive to peace and security. Member States should respect each other's cultures and values and commit to peaceful coexistence.

As we approach the seventieth anniversary, we should address our shortcomings and challenges. The Security Council, as the principal organ of the United Nations charged with the responsibility for the maintenance of peace and security, should reflect current geopolitical realities in order to maintain peace for the future. A more democratic and representative Security Council will enhance the legitimacy of its decisions in the maintenance of peace and security. Reform of the Security Council, which is long overdue, will involve the embedding of equity, transparency and accountability.

According to Article 24 of the Charter, the Security Council acts on behalf of all Member States. That universal representation needs to be reflected in the composition of the Council today. The way by which we reform the Council will have a strong bearing on this world body and on our common security.

It is important that the Security Council act in an even-handed manner. Double standards and the selective application of rules and concepts only undermine confidence in the Council. SADC is concerned that the protection of civilians is used as a pretext to intervene in some conflicts, and yet it is not applied in connection with graver situations that result in thousands of causalities.

SADC also notes with concern the growing inequalities among nations in terms of adherence to the rule of law at the international level. It is regrettable that in practice international law is applied only against smaller and weaker States, while bigger Powers enjoy unmerited, yet unassailable, immunity. The sovereignty of smaller and weaker States is increasingly becoming less sacred than that of powerful States. Equally agonizing is the impotence and helplessness on the part of the United Nations in the face of growing violations of international law by major Powers.

The Declaration of the High-level Meeting of the General Assembly on the Rule of Law at the National and International Levels, adopted by Heads of State and Government in September 2012, cautioned States to avoid the use of unilateral measures against other States. Such measures, which are often employed by powerful States against weaker ones to achieve narrow political objectives, undermine international peace and security as well as socioeconomic development. SADC is concerned about the increase in Council-imposed sanctions. Over the years, the Security Council has increasingly resorted to using Chapter VII of the Charter to address issues that do not necessarily pose a serious threat to peace and security. We strongly believe that coercive measures should be used only when peace and security are under real threat. Sanctions should be considered only after measures for the pacific settlement of disputes under Chapter VI of the Charter have been exhausted. Furthermore, they should be imposed for a specific time frame. We reject the use of the multilateral system to pursue selfish political agendas.

States must refrain from the threat or use of force to solve disputes. The United Nations must continue to champion the resolution of conflicts by peaceful means within the confines of international law. History has demonstrated that heavy-handed interventions do not bring about sustainable solutions, but cost more lives and destroy economies and social infrastructure, resulting in failed States. The use of force must be guided by the provisions of Article 51 of the Charter, which authorizes force only in cases of legitimate self-defence. In the African context, article 4 (h) of the Constitutive Act of the African Union authorizes intervention in grave circumstances, such as genocide, war crimes and crimes against humanity.

Since both the General Assembly and the Security Council often are not in a position to undertake the proper assessment of any conflict due to their remoteness from situations of conflict, it is imperative that regional and subregional organizations in areas of proximity are empowered to take action in that regard. The importance of building sustained partnerships between regional organizations and the United Nations cannot be overemphasized. Such partnerships enhance the operational capabilities of those organizations in peace enforcement and peacekeeping activities. The foundation of Africa's partnership with the United Nations is based on Chapter VIII of the Charter of the United Nations, which provides for the participation of regional organizations as first responders to ensure the pacific settlement of local disputes. In Africa, where most peacekeeping missions operate, the partnership is proving critical for saving civilian lives and averting tragedy. In Darfur, the African Union took proactive action to save lives before the United Nations moved in. In the Central African Republic, the swift deployment of the African Union-led a force and the French Operation Sangaris prevented a further deterioration of the situation.

In accordance with the Protocol Relating to the Establishment of the Peace and Security Council of the African Union, SADC has established a standby brigade whose mandate includes undertaking interventions for peace and security. The United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo Force Intervention Brigade is a good example of the cooperation that exists between SADC and the United Nations.

Finally, SADC believes that the nexus between development, peace and security, human rights and the rule of law is inextricable. As we craft a transformative post-2015 development agenda, let us also ensure that it is responsive to the critical needs of our peoples. Poverty eradication, economic transformation, including industrialization and protection of the planet Earth, can be achieved only in an environment of peace and security.

The President (*spoke in Chinese*): I now give the floor to the representative of Poland.

Mr. Winid (Poland): Poland aligns itself with the statement delivered by the observer of the European Union. I should like to add some comments in my national capacity.

I thank you, Mr. President, for convening today's debate. Given the primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security conferred on the Security Council, it is very topical and appropriate to concentrate this debate on reconfirming the fundamentals of the Charter of the United Nations.

Let me begin with a story of Poland's extraordinary path as a member of the United Nations. In 1939, Poland became the very first victim of the Second World War in Europe. We were subsequently invaded by both our neighbours, on 1 September 1939 from the West and on 17 September from the East. Throughout the next six years, my country not only lost 6 million people but also made an immense military contribution to the defeat of the Nazism. Fighting on all fronts, Poles accounted for the fifth biggest Allied army in the European theatre.

It is therefore a paradox of history that, due to an objection by one of the Allies, the legitimate Polish Government in London was deprived of its right to participate in the work of the preliminary conference that drafted the Charter of the United Nations, as well as to represent Poland at the founding San Francisco Conference. A great Polish pianist, Arthur Rubinstein, who was invited to play the American anthem at the inaugural concert at the Conference, noted as he entered the hall, with its long line of all the national flags of participating States, that the Polish flag was missing. After playing the American anthem, he stood up and said: In "this hall, where the great nations gather to make this world a better place, I do not see the flag of Poland, on behalf of which this cruel war was waged." He then sat down and played the Polish anthem in a great resounding forte, as a symbolic artistic protest against injustice. Despite the absence of representatives of the legitimate Polish Government at the Conference, Poland was counted as one of the United Nations founding Members by amending the wording of Article 3 of the Charter. It took my country nearly another half-century to regain full sovereignty. The story of Poland must teach us all that no country should ever be left behind if we are ever to create a truly United Nations. The rules and provisions of the Charter are equally binding on all. The strong cannot silence the weak.

As one of the founding Members of the United Nations, Poland is fully committed to the purposes and principles of the Charter. The 70 years of the history of the Organization fully confirm the validity and continuing importance of the United Nations founding act, particularly in strengthening efforts by the international community to maintain peace and security. One would have hoped that, 70 years after the Second World War, armed conflicts would have disappeared from international life. Unfortunately, that is not the case. Numerous military conflicts on many continents show that the reasons for which the United Nations was established are equally as valid today as in the early days of the Organization. We should be proud of many situations when firm and consistent actions by Member States helped to prevent threats to international peace, contributed to conflict resolution and restored peace and stability. But we should equally remember our failures, in order to learn from those lessons and prevent the reoccurrence of similar tragic instances.

Let me be clear: we strongly believe in the principles upon which the system of the United Nations is based. Respect for the basic rules of the Charter — for example, regarding sovereignty, territorial integrity and the right of countries to decide their own futures — is a prerequisite for the fair and just participation of States in international life. We have seen far too many threats and challenges to international peace and security when those rules were not observed. We see it now in Ukraine, which is facing external military aggression and where the values enshrined in the Preamble and in Article 2 of the Charter, such as respect for the obligations arising from international law and the peaceful settlement of international disputes, are seriously compromised. We see it in Southern Europe, where human dignity and freedom are being challenged by terrorists and criminals pretending to act in the name of Islam.

Respect for democracy and the rule of law is as important in international relations as it is on a national level. As Members of the United Nations, we are equally obliged to implement international law. We cannot shy away from using all the tools at our disposal, including sanctions, when dealing with clear violations of international norms.

In the twenty-first century, external threats to national security do not come only from other countries or international terrorist organizations. An important example is the fate of the small island States, which face the challenge of the dire consequences of global warming. The United Nations has to better address those new developments.

Today, Poland stands ready to further contribute to the United Nations. Solidarity, responsibility and commitment are key words that characterize our activities at the United Nations. Solidarity is not only the name of the movement that some years ago triggered historic political and economic changes in Poland. It is also a symbol of the much-needed international cooperation that is vital to the success of our common efforts.

The President (*spoke in Chinese*): I now give the floor to the representative of Slovenia.

Mr. Logar (Slovenia): I would like to thank the Chinese presidency, especially the Foreign Minister, for convening this open debate.

Slovenia aligns itself with the statement made by the observer of the European Union earlier today.

The world has gone through profound changes in the past 70 years. We have witnessed the progress of humankind, an increase in the number of sovereign States, the rise of non-State actors, climate change and environmental degradation, inter- and intra-State conflicts,and the complexity of the many global challenges we face today. Addressing those new challenges, which require global action, is increasingly difficult for the international community — or, rather, the United Nations, which, so far, has been unable to entirely adapt to the changing world.

There is no doubt that the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations are still very much valid. However, if we want the United Nations to remain credible today and in future, we have to do better in fulfilling them.

We believe that the United Nations and its States Members should do more to promote and protect human rights and to address growing inequalities. Respect for human rights is the basis for peace, stability, development and prosperity, and the Security Council plays a key role in ensuring that every person enjoys their fundamental rights and freedoms.

Slovenia's emphasis on the importance of human rights is also reflected in its active support for the Secretary-General's Human Rights Up Front initiative, which inspired the idea for the conference on the theme Rights for Peace: Challenges and Opportunities, which will take place in Slovenia in September.

In 2015, 10 years after the adoption of the World Summit Outcome Document, we should fulfil the commitments of our leaders, notably to uphold the responsibility to protect. We should try not to reduce that responsibility to military intervention alone, but take into account the other pillars as well. Focus should be placed on sharing responsibility among United Nations Member States and trying to help each other, in particular those in need. Particular emphasis should be placed on the core principle that each and every country has the responsibility to protect its own population. There should be no excuses whatsoever. The principle of the responsibility to protect does not undermine sovereignty; on the contrary, its implementation can only strengthen sovereignty.

We believe that a political division among Member States of the Council and the Council's failure to take action when the lives of people are at stake is unacceptable. That is happening too often and is becoming a great problem. It is high time to fulfil another key commitment of the 2005 World Summit, namely, reforming the Security Council and adapting it to the new realities and circumstances of the international community. It is necessary to continue to adapt Council's working methods and regulate the use of the veto in actions aimed at preventing or ending the most heinous acts, such as genocide, crimes against humanity and war crimes. In that regard, Slovenia aligns itself with the statement made by the representative of Maldives on behalf of the Accountability, Coherence and Transparency Group.

The United Nations Charter and the resolutions of the Security Council and General Assembly should be respected and implemented. With regard to the Security Council, it is important to establish a clear overview of adopted resolutions and the deficiencies in their implementation before devising an action plan on how to overcome the difficulties.

The Council and all Member States should make better use of Chapters VI and VIII of the Charter. Prevention and the timely peaceful resolution of potential conflicts are by far the most cost- and resource-efficient means. Slovenia focuses particularly on the issue of mediation. In that regard, it is also important to enhance cooperation between the United Nations and regional organizations and among the regional organizations themselves.

When conflicts do occur, however, we need to ensure that people responsible for war crimes, crimes against humanity and gross abuses of human rights are held accountable, regardless of their side in the conflict. International criminal justice bodies, including the International Criminal Court, could be of significant help in such cases. The rule of law is one of the key elements for peace, stability and development. In that regard, Slovenia aligns itself with the statement delivered by the representative of Austria on behalf of the Group of Friends of the Rule of Law.

In conclusion, I believe that we also have to use this year's review processes on the implementation of resolution 1325 (2000), on women and peace and security, and on the peacebuilding architecture and peacekeeping missions to make the United Nations more credible. We have to keep in mind that the United Nations is only as strong and efficient as its Member States allow it to be.

The President (*spoke in Chinese*): I now give the floor to the representative of Canada.

Mr. Rishchynski (Canada): As we approach the seventieth anniversary of the United Nations, it is a fitting time to reflect on how we, the Member States, and our representatives on the Security Council uphold the guiding principles of the Charter of the United Nations, specifically peace, security and the respect for human rights and the dignity of persons.

The Charter underscores the Security Council's important work in the protection of civilians and, by extension, the promotion of equality between women and men, as well as the empowerment, human rights, protection and well-being of women and girls in situations that pose a threat to international peace and security. It is important that we address how the Council must evolve in order to respond to shifting and emerging peace and security issues, and meet those responsibilities.

(*spoke in French*)

The legitimacy of the United Nations family, in particular that of the Security Council, depends upon its effectiveness, the quality and timeliness of its decisions and its ability to mobilize the necessary support for action in times of crisis. The primary responsibility of the Security Council is to maintain international peace and security. We cannot allow this body to be used for political self-interest, thereby flouting the very principles on which it was founded. We cannot stand idly by while innocent civilians, women and children are made the targets of atrocities, a tactic that has become frighteningly common in modern-day conflicts. As a Member State, Canada expects the Council to act when the guiding principles of the United Nations are flouted or disregarded, and thereby threatening peace and security. Those responsible for serious violations of human rights and international humanitarian law must be held to account. We expect the members of the Council to respect the independence, sovereignty, unity and territorial integrity of other Member States. Unfortunately, that has not been borne out in Ukraine.

(*spoke in English*)

Fundamentally, the United Nations and the Charter itself will be judged not by words but on the ability to act to preserve international peace and security and to protect the most vulnerable. The horrific events in the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL)-affected areas of Iraq and Syria add impetus to the need for the Council to show real leadership in support of women and girls in particular. The rampant sexual violence and abuse perpetrated by ISIL against women is an assault on all of our values. The most recent killings of 21 Egyptian Christians in Libya, again at the hands of terrorists, is a stark reminder that people are killed daily around the world for their beliefs. In our judgement, the freedom of religion is a litmus test of the degree with which other fundamental freedoms can be ignored.

In Darfur mass rapes occur, and the Government simply covers them up. Without further delay, the United Nations must properly investigate the abuses that have taken place, and the Government of the Sudan must be held to account for its complicity in the hiding of such horrific crimes. In Syria the Al-Assad regime has dropped barrel bombs and used chemical weapons against its own people. Hundreds of thousands of people are not receiving the emergency life-saving assistance that they are in dire need of because the regime will not let humanitarian aid get through.

(*spoke in French*)

Those few examples serve as daily reminders that in far too many places civilians are deliberately targeted and continue to suffer from unspeakable crimes. That reality stands in stark contrast to the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations. All too often, implementation falls short of translating the decisions of the Council into concrete actions. The Council must act and exercise real leadership to ensure that those failures can be overcome. It must be willing to exercise the full range of options at its disposal to stop violence against the most vulnerable. Faced with the many challenges before us — combating violent extremism, the use of sexual violence and rape as a weapon of war, the targeting of civilians, especially women and children, protracted humanitarian crises, and public health emergencies that threaten years of development gains and the stability of affected countries — it is time to act decisively in those areas where we continue to fall short.

(*spoke in English*)

In our judgement, it is critical that we defend our principles with concrete action. Vulnerable populations around the world deserve the full commitment of the United Nations. The United Nations and the Security Council can continue to rely on our country to support those efforts and to promote freedom, democracy, human rights and the rule of law — the very underpinnings of the Charter of the United Nations — wherever in the world that support may be required.

The President (*spoke in Chinese*): I now give the floor to the representative of Ethiopia.

Mr. Alemu (Ethiopia): Allow me, first of all, to thank you, Mr. President, for taking the initiative to organize this important debate in the context of the seventieth anniversary of the United Nations. I would like to join those who spoke before me in expressing appreciation to the Secretary-General for his briefing.

As clearly indicated in the Preamble of the Charter, the United Nations was established, among other things, to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war. As the Preamble also makes clear right from the outset, the United Nations is intended to be an Organization of the peoples of the United Nations. Over the past 70 years of its existence, the United Nations has indeed been an indispensable body for advancing collective security and promoting multilateral cooperation among its Member States in line with the spirit of the Charter.

There is no doubt that the Organization has passed through many challenges; it has had its successes and failures. But I am sure we all agree that the United Nations is the only indispensable universal Organization we have that we cannot live without. That is true in all the areas of its purposes. The question is how we can make this premier international Organization much more relevant in addressing the challenges and threats faced by humankind in the twenty-first century.

There is no doubt that the United Nations collective security system has helped to reduce the danger of war and, in peacekeeping, the Organization has made enormous contributions. However, the global geopolitical landscape has changed tremendously since its establishment. The increasing number of intra-State conflicts and the threat of terrorism and violent extremism, as well as other transnational crimes by non-State actors, are posing greater risks to world peace and security than ever before. The prevalence of poverty and inequality, the spread of pandemic diseases, the impact of climate change and other socioeconomic challenges also have serious implications for the security and survival of humankind as a whole. That is why, particularly at this juncture in history, we need the United Nations more than ever before.

That is also why the Organization has to be able to address its weaknesses and make a greater difference, not only in the security area but also in the economic, social, human rights and humanitarian spheres. That is why the reform of the United Nations is so critical: so that the Organization lives up to what is stated in the Preamble of the Charter that it is the Organization of the peoples of the United Nations. Obviously, the Organization can only be as strong as its Member States representing their respective people are prepared to make it.

The year 2015 offers a unique opportunity for us to reaffirm our commitment to multilateralism by summoning the political will and political leadership necessary to achieve the transformative agenda that we have agreed to carry forward in the post-2015 period. That cannot be achieved without the full cooperation of all countries — developed and developing — based on our respective capacities. Failing to do so will have serious repercussions for the peace and prosperity of our world. For instance, terrorism and violent extremism is not a matter of concern for a few Member States that are directly affected, but a threat to the peaceful and harmonious existence of humankind as a whole. That is why we have to fight it together, without any double standards, in the spirit of resolution 2178 (2014).

It is also incumbent upon us to address the root causes and manifestations of terrorism. Ending poverty is not a socioeconomic issue alone, and that is why the success of the post-2015 development agenda is so crucial. Therefore, it is in the enlightened self-interest of all of us — both developed and developing countries — to work towards the realization of the ambitious goals that we have set for ourselves within the framework of that agenda and demonstrate the necessary compromise to agree on its means of implementation during the Third International Conference on Financing for Development, to be held in Addis Ababa.

In conclusion, what all this means is that we have a historic responsibility to take bold steps in many areas. In that regard, we need not only reaffirm our commitment to the purposes and principles of the United Nations Charter, but also muster the courage and commitment to rise up to the challenge. Ethiopia is fully committed to do its part, as it has done over the past 70 years. Our country knows full well, from its own experience, that, as Emperor Haile Selassie stated in his address to the General Assembly in 1963 in referring to the purposes and principles of the United Nations, "their value depends wholly on our will to observe and honour them and give them content and meaning." (*A/PV.1229, para. 5*)

The President (*spoke in Chinese*): I now give the floor to the representative of Ireland.

Mr. Mawe (Ireland): I would like to thank you, Sir, for having organized today's debate on this important subject. I would also like to align myself with the statement delivered earlier on behalf of the European Union and its member States.

In the concept note for this debate (S/2015/87, annex), it is rightly stated that the United Nations is the result of humankind's long struggle for peace and development. It goes on to restate one of the primary objectives of the United Nations — to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war. Over the past 70 years, the United Nations has played its role in ensuring the avoidance of another global cataclysm on the scale of the two major wars of the last century. But the past 70 years have not, unfortunately, been marked purely by peace and development. There have been too many conflicts that have claimed the lives of millions of people across the globe, more and more of them entirely innocent civilians.

At the same time, we have witnessed an unprecedented rise in global development. The global population of 2.5 billion of 1945 has today grown to some 7 billion. Global life expectancy has increased dramatically, from an average of 46 years in the post-war period to nearly 70 today. A larger population, married to new technology, scientific development and free trade, has also led to huge economic growth, providing much higher living standards across the globe.

Overall, as we reflect on the history of the past 70 years, what other lessons can we draw? Much of the period was overshadowed by the Cold War and the existential threat of a nuclear conflict, which would have devastated the world and its inhabitants. The imminence of that danger may have receded, but Ireland, along with many fellow Members, continues to work for a world free of nuclear weapons and the dangers they pose, along with other disarmament objectives. The end of the Cold War was not the end of history, as some had foretold. A complex multipolar world has emerged. It is one where even the largest and best-resourced nations struggle to deal with threats from much smaller and dispersed enemies.

We recognize that in the 70 years of the United Nations and the 60 years of our membership, a great deal has changed. However, for Ireland, our values remain unaltered. We stand for a fairer world, a just world, a secure world and a sustainable world. In defending these values, we are, like you, Sir, firmly committed to the multilateral framework and the rule of international law for the conduct of international relations. As such, we are guided by the following principles: dialogue and compromise as the solution to conflicts between peoples; respect for the rule of law and solidarity within the international community when a democratic State is threatened; a strong commitment to peacekeeping while preserving Irish military neutrality; the critical importance of development; and the promotion of human rights, in particular the rights of minorities and of women and girls.

The current threats to international peace and security, and those which occupy this Council on a daily basis, are manifold. The principle of dialogue and compromise as the solution to intractable conflicts between peoples is one that guided my Government during the lengthy peace process in Northern Ireland. The Irish Government, working closely with the British Government, endeavoured to keep the focus on the ultimate goal of peace during the many difficulties and setbacks that threatened to derail the entire process. I would hope that others engaged in promoting peace benefit from a similar focus and approach.

If the Security Council is to uphold its responsibilities for the maintenance of peace and security, it must be fit for purpose. Along with our colleagues in the Accountability, Coherence and Transparency group, with whose statement we align ourselves, Ireland continues to press for a Council that is more open, more transparent and more accountable. We acknowledge the improvements made in the past year but reiterate that there is much more that can be done if the will is there to do so.

Separately, we will participate actively in the intergovernmental negotiations on reform of the composition of the Security Council. Bringing the composition of the Security Council into line with the realities of today's world is long overdue and it is our earnest hope that this work, under Ambassador Rattray's guidance, can be brought to a conclusion this year as the United Nations celebrates its seventieth anniversary.

Finally, the United Nations continues to critically reflect on how it can best serve its Members and meet its objectives. Ireland, as a significant and longstanding contributor to peace keeping missions, looks forward to this year's review of peace operations, led by Jose Ramos-Horta. We equally look forward to the review of the peacebuilding architecture and the global study on the implementation of resolution 1325 (2000) on women and peace and security. These three reviews reflect the reality that maintaining peace and security is complex and requires longer-term engagement in addition to responding to immediate crises.

Placed alongside the agreements being pursued on sustainable development and climate change, we can make 2015 a landmark year in the United Nations, which will enhance the global significance and impact of the Organization and the way in which the goals of the Charter are fulfilled. Let us have the courage and the will to see each of these processes to a successful conclusion.

Mr. Hoxha (Albania): We appreciate the opportunity to take part in this open debate on this very important topic. We thank you, Sir, for the very interesting concept note provided in preparation for this debate (S/2015/87, annex). Albania aligns itself with the statement delivered by the representative of the European Union. I shall add some remarks in my national capacity.

This year marks the seventieth anniversary of the founding of the United Nations. Nothing could have been nobler in 1945, nor today, than the common ideals enshrined in the Charter of the Organization, including, notably, "to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war, which twice in our lifetime has brought untold sorrow to mankind". There has been immense progress during the seven decades of the United Nations existence. Let me briefly mention some of the areas where the United Nations, by introducing and developing new concepts, has brought real change.

The concept of peacekeeping as a wholly new means of conflict management invented was under the United Nations. The vast issue of human rights — enshrined in the Preamble of the Charter objective to reaffirm faith in fundamental human rights, in the dignity and worth of the human person, in the equal rights of men and women and of nations large and small — was almost inexistent before the founding of the United Nations. It managed the decolonization process. The immense progress made with respect to the new and challenging agendas on women, girls, children and the elderly, among other areas, and the drastic reduction of poverty worldwide have thoroughly transformed nations, empowered societies and contributed significantly to peace and security.

Undeniably, the United Nations has contributed greatly to the transformed world, indeed the better world, we live in today. But disappointment and failure have also been constantly present. Millions of people across the world who have placed their trust on the United Nations and the Security Council in particular have had no other choice but to water down their expectations when faced with wars, atrocities and massive human rights breaches of the sort from which the United Nations has solemnly pledged to save them.

In 2013, the number of refugees, asylum-seekers and displaced people exceeded 50 million, half of them children. The ongoing crises in various parts of the world, including Syria and South Sudan, have left the world with the immense and increasing cost of the failure to prevent and/or resolve conflict. Important recommendations on several situations from the General Assembly and other United Nations mechanisms have, most regrettably, not been referred to the International Criminal Court. The solemn pledge of "never again" has been repeated too often, and manmade tragedies keep recurring, thereby challenging the belief in humanity's capacity to learn from its failures.

Albania remains particularly and deeply concerned about the soon-to-be one-year-long catastrophic developments in Ukraine. General Assembly resolution 68/262, which supports the sovereignty, independence, unity and the territorial integrity of Ukraine, remains unimplemented, and the Security Council continues to be deadlocked on the issue. We have welcomed the latest peace agreement and we reiterate our call for the serious and sincere engagement of the Council towards a durable political solution there.

The Charter of the United Nations tasks the Security Council, as the body responsible for peace and security, to act swiftly and resolutely when States face situations involving mass atrocities or grave human rights violations, or are at risk from genocide, crimes against humanity, war crimes and ethnic cleansing. We know only too well what happens when the Council fails to live up to its responsibilities — innocent people, mostly women and children, will pay the price. The credibility and legitimacy of the Council and of the Organization are seriously affected.

Worse, the use of the veto in such cases betrays the trust of millions of people for whom the United Nations is the only hope. It openly neglects and despises victims. It empowers dictators and other serious human rights offenders, and undermines international efforts to end impunity. In that respect, Albania reiterates its strong support for the French proposal and the efforts of ACT for a code of conduct on refraining from the use of veto in situations of genocide, war crimes, crimes against humanity and ethnic cleansing.

In concluding, I wish to recall that the core mandate of our Organization is to maintain or restore international peace and security. That is, in other words, its raison d'être. The authority and the legitimacy vested in the Security Council to fulfil that pledge has no precedent in international relations, and the Council must live up to its responsibility and world confidence and fully uphold the principles enshrined in the Charter.

The President (*spoke in Chinese*): I give the floor to the representative of Turkey.

Mr. Çevik (Turkey): Let me begin by thanking the Chinese presidency for organizing this debate.

The globe is experiencing challenging times. The number and intensity of violent conflicts are on the rise. Xenophobia, discrimination, attacks against migrants and intolerance threaten the very nature of peaceful coexistence, while epidemics, terrorism and cybercrime add to those challenges. However, budgetary and administrative constraints, coupled with the increased divisions within the Council and the United Nations, impede the effectiveness of our response capabilities. One tragic example is Syria. In the words of the Spokesperson for the Secretary-General on Syria the other day,

> "The last four years of war have led to the deaths of over 200,000 civilians, the greatest refugee crisis of modern times and created an environment in which extremist groups and terrorist organizations such as ISIL/Daesh flourish".

Any failure of the United Nations to react to critical issues threatening international peace and security undermines the credibility of this Organization. Therefore, rethinking how to enable a more effective United Nations response to emerging threats is particularly critical. There is no doubt that the Charter must be the guiding light in our endeavours. However, we must also adapt our response to present-day realities, which are different than those of 70 years ago. We must build upon the lessons we have learned since the end of the Second World War, always bearing in mind the very first Article of the Charter, which emphasizes that the purpose of this Organization is to take effective collective measures for the prevention and removal of threats to peace.

I would like to highlight some of our priorities in making the United Nations system more responsive, efficient, effective and transparent. First, the quest for a more democratic, representative, transparent, effective and accountable Security Council must be prioritized. The interconnectedness of the different aspects of the reform agenda also requires a holistic and comprehensive attitude to reform.

Secondly, we also support the review processes this year on peace operations, peacebuilding and gender. When combined, those processes aim to provide comprehensive answers regarding the United Nations response to the interconnected nature of current global threats and to preventing relapses into conflict. They should also address the increasing complexity of peacekeeping environments, where unconventional threats are increasingly affecting the work and security of United Nations personnel.

Thirdly, the effective use of Chapter VI tools to promote conflict prevention should be prioritized. The guiding principles of mediation, such as the consent of local parties, the impartiality of mediators, the inclusivity of the mediation process and national ownership all have a solid foundation in the Charter. The Group of Friends of Mediation, which is co-chaired by Turkey and Finland, strives to increase the role of mediation in the United Nations system.

The fourth element is the nexus between security, development and human rights. The priorities stated in the synthesis report of the Secretary-General (A/69/700) — dignity, people, justice, partnership and prosperity — should guide our peace and development work ahead, so that no one is left behind. Encouraging policies that lead to increased participation, inclusiveness and the economic empowerment of all segments of society while promoting good governance, human rights and the rule of law are key to sustainable peace and development.

Fifthly, the sovereign equality, territorial integrity and political independence of Member States are clearly stipulated in the Charter. Cooperation with regional and subregional organizations is another prerequisite for promoting local ownership. In addition, successful partnerships with local Governments, civil society, the private sector and academia will not only foster local ownership, but prove useful in terms of efficient and effective resource mobilization.

Finally, there is a need for serious international debate to narrow the gaps between diverging views on issues such as stigmatization, stereotyping, intolerance, racism, discrimination, freedom of expression, religion and belief. The Alliance of Civilizations, launched by Turkey and Spain, provides a vital framework for overcoming artificial divides and building bridges across cultures and religions.

We believe that we have the necessary toolbox to improve the United Nations response to the challenges and threats the world faces. The Charter provides the most important tool in that respect. If there is sufficient political will, there is no reason for us not to succeed.

In relation to the crisis in Syria, we categorically deny the baseless allegations raised by a certain delegation just a little while ago. The recent operation conducted by the Turkish armed forces was for the evacuation of the Suleiman Shah Memorial Outpost, a 10-acre plot of land of Turkish territory inside Syria, which was facing an imminent threat from Daesh. The operation, which lasted nine hours, was conducted on the basis of Turkey's rights, which emanate from international agreements and international law. The President of the Security Council, the Secretary-General and others were informed of the operation the very same day.

Mr. Sareer (Maldives): The Maldives is a member of the Accountability, Coherence and Transparency (ACT) group, a cross-regional group comprised of 24 regional Member States, and we are honoured to speak on its behalf.

ACT congratulates China on holding this open debate. In the light of the seventieth anniversary of the United Nations, we have a unique opportunity to reflect and reaffirm the purposes and principles of the Charter. It was 70 years ago that the United Nations was founded to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war. Although this goal has been ambitious, the world would have been in a far worse state without the work of the United Nations. Yet, looking at the numerous crises all around the world and their dreadful impact on civilians on the ground, for instance in the Middle East, Ukraine, Somalia, Nigeria or South Sudan, and with the Syrian humanitarian catastrophe reaching proportions not seen since the Second World War, there is indeed no doubt that the United Nations has not yet come close to fulfilling its mission.

The seventieth anniversary of the United Nations must be a time for action. Now is the time to take steps to enhance the efficiency of the working methods of the Council and ensure that the commitments taken by the international community are effectively implemented. That call was also already made in the 2005 World Summit Outcome (General Assembly resolution 60/1), in which the improvement of the working methods of the Security Council was recognized as a concern of the international community. The seventieth anniversary of the United Nations, along with the tenth anniversary of the World Summit, should remind us that, despite our achievements, greater work needs to be done. In fact, the overall discussion regarding the improvement of the Council's working methods has now moved beyond the United Nations conference rooms and is echoed by the media and international civil society. The time has come to make this step and ensure enhancements.

ACT is convinced that more inclusiveness and accountability will contribute to a more efficient and effective Council. We commend all the efforts the Council has made thus far, such as last year's notable 7 per cent increase in the proportion of public and private meetings as opposed to closed consultations. We would also like to welcome Angola as the new chair of the Informal Working Group on Documentation and Other Procedural Questions, and ACT looks forward to collaborating as a constructive partner with Angola and the Working Group on issues of working methods.

I would also like here to remind the Security Council of the letter sent by ACT to the President of the Council on 28 January with concrete suggestions in order to contribute to the enhancement of the Council's transparency and accountability. Those recommendations are based on ACT reflections and also take into consideration the statements delivered by the wider membership on related issues. In addition to the ideas that will be developed further in this statement, let me also highlight some of the elements presented by our Group in the letter: the necessity for the Council to sharpen its preventive role by fully implementing resolution 2171 (2014); enhanced interaction with the Peacebuilding Commission, which could assume a greater prevention role; greater collaboration between the Security Council and the troop- and police-contributing countries; greater consideration of the membership's recommendations delivered at open debates; more joint initiatives by Council members regarding penholders, and so on.

That said, today we would like to outline three ACT-supported topics with regard to adapting working methods.

First, concerning implementation, while the adoption of no less than six presidential notes in the past two years specifying better working methods is highly commendable, we note that often the implementation of the adopted measures has proved to be unsatisfactory or inconsistent. ACT encourages the Council to monitor and report consistently on the implementation of the measures through the Informal Working Group on Documentation and in cooperation with the Secretariat.

Secondly, concerning the appointment of the Secretary-General, in view of the approaching appointment of the Organization's next Secretary-General, we invite a discussion on how to improve the appointment process. ACT calls for greater transparency and involvement on the part of the wider membership in accordance with the relevant General Assembly resolutions. This should include the following points: a proper, formal, transparent nomination process; the official publication of all candidatures; the possibility of the General Assembly convening hearings with the candidates on a voluntary basis; and an invitation to the Security Council to consider including more than one name in its recommendation to the General Assembly.

Thirdly, regarding the use of the veto, the ongoing crisis in Syria has demonstrated the consequences of a Council unable properly to fulfil its responsibilities. ACT invites all members of the Security Council, elected and permanent, to voluntarily commit to refraining from voting against Council action aimed at preventing or ending genocide, crimes against humanity and war crimes. Our Group has been pleased that France, as a permanent member of the Council, has taken up the advocacy of this idea and welcomes the broad and supportive discussion on the proposal. We also support the rapid finalization of a code of conduct, as suggested by France, and will be submitting our suggestions for such a code of conduct soon.

In closing, we believe that the propositions just made are not only legitimate but also relevant; they also are necessary to enhance the performance of the Security Council, which today faces simultaneously an unprecedented number of serious conflicts and complex crises, amounting to immense human suffering.

The President (*spoke in Chinese*): I now give the floor to the Permanent Observer of the African Union to the United Nations.

Mr. António (African Union) (*spoke in French*): Allow me at the outset to warmly congratulate you, Mr. President, and also to convey the congratulations of the African Union (AU) Commission following the assumption by your country of the presidency of the Security Council. We believe that you will build on your experience and dedication in heading the Council's work this month. I wish you every success.

I would also like to welcome the participation this morning of the Secretary-General as well as of other eminent personalities who have come to New York to participate in this important debate. I should like in particular to welcome the participation of His Excellency Mr. Aminu Wali, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Nigeria; and His Excellency Mr. Excellency Mr. Manuel Domingos Augusto, Secretary of State for External Relations of the Republic of Angola, who is still with us here today, and who, along with Chad, daily is paving the way within the United Nations for Africa to become a non-permanent member of the Security Council.

China's choice of this topic is a good illustration of its commitment to the purposes and principles of the Charter at a time when the United Nations and the world as a whole are preparing to celebrate the seventieth anniversary of the founding of our Organization.

Seventy years after the creation of the United Nations, its Charter remains fully relevant, and our Organization continues to be as fundamental as it has always been in ensuring the trinity of peace, human rights and development. Looking back at the past, it is clear that the ambitious system of collective security set up by the United Nations continues, in spite of the limitations encountered in its implementation, to be a sine qua non for tackling the global challenges that weigh heavily on international peace and security.

The question today is how to ensure that we fill the gap between the principles set forth and the results we achieve each time that action is taken. Indeed, given the proliferation of cross-border threats, in particular international terrorism, the time has come to mobilize and consolidate the efforts of all actors in the international community as well as to strengthen strategic partnerships, complying with the principle of the Security Council bearing primary responsibility for upholding international peace and security. It is that spirit of cooperation that characterizes all United Nations activities, including those in the area of peacekeeping and international security, objectives that guided the creation of our Organization.

Traditionally, in its relations with the United Nations, the African Union has fully complied with the spirit of cooperation and endorsed the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations. Its efforts to promote peace and security on the continent are complementary to United Nations activities.

The African Union has, inter alia, deployed a number of peacekeeping operations, including in Burundi, Darfur, Mali, the Central African Republic and Somalia. The stabilization efforts undertaken by those missions and the sacrifices made by their staff have substantially paved the way and facilitated the work of the United Nations missions that then take over.

This division of responsibility is taking shape as a system where the African Union has the first boots on the ground, stabilizing the situation in areas of conflict and thereby creating a situation where the United Nations can deploy peacekeeping operations at a later stage. This partnership is a boon for the United Nations and for the African Union, but it would be well served by a more innovative interpretation of the provisions of Chapter VIII of the United Nations. That would allow for the African Union and its regional mechanisms to fully play their roles as an integral part of the global system of collective security.

To do so, it is important for the two organizations to act with greater policy coherence so as to further strengthen the partnership regarding preliminary consultations for decision-making, a common understanding of the issues raised and support for African peacekeeping efforts. An appropriate solution should also be found regarding the legitimate request of the African Union for the financing of peacekeeping operations undertaken with United Nations consent.

Along those lines, the current review of United Nations peacekeeping operations by the High-level Panel, which was recently hosted in Addis Ababa by the Chairperson of the AU Commission in the context of productive consultations with the African Union, was an opportunity to promote our common goal of establishing a ground-breaking, forward-looking partnership pursuant to Chapter VIII of the Charter.

I cannot conclude without recalling the importance of correcting the historic injustice done to Africa, which remains the only continent that is not represented in the category of permanent members of the Security Council, while also being underrepresented in the non-permanent category. Frankly, Africa's lack of adequate representation remains at the heart of the Security Council's deficiencies of representativeness and legitimacy. I would like to take this opportunity to call on Member States to correct that injstice by supporting the common African position as outlined in the Ezulwini Consensus and tne Sirte Declaration.

The President (*spoke in Chinese*): I now give the floor to the representative of Cyprus.

Mr. Emiliou (Cyprus): I would first like to congratulate China on organizing this timely debate.

The Republic of Cyprus aligns itself with the statement delivered earlier by the observer of the European Union, and would like to make some additional remarks in its national capacity.

This year marks the seventieth anniversary of the founding of the United Nations, one of the most remarkable achievements of the international community, built on the ruins of a devastating war. For countries like the Republic of Cyprus, its foundation has been a source of inspiration in our endeavour to achieve national independence within the context of the anti-colonialist movement of the 1950s and 1960s. Cyprus's independence, in 1960, followed a long series of struggles on the part of our people, including their contribution to the victory against Nazism during the Second World War. Although Cyprus was a small country under colonial rule at the time, 10 per cent of its male population volunteered to serve in a British regiment as well as in other Allied armies. Greek and Turkish Cypriots fought and sacrificed together under the flag of ecumenical values such as democracy and humanism.

The principles enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations have been further developed and enriched by subsequent landmark conventions such as the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination and the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. In addition, the Rome Statute and its corresponding Kampala amendments, which my country fully supports, have strengthened justice and accountability with regard to atrocities and war crimes. The United Nations Charter has also been complemented in areas such as maritime jurisdiction via the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, the protection of the environment and social and economic development. That in turn has led to the advancement of the rule of law and the further development of customary international law.

Regrettably, Cyprus constitutes a case in which the principles of the United Nations Charter are still being violated as a result of the continuing Turkish occupation, which raises the question, to this body and to the whole of the international community, as to whether those principles are being adhered to unreservedly and universally or whether they are being diluted by mere declarations of good intentions and selective application, only for the world to eventually revert to a state of anarchy, double standards and the perception that might is right.

Cyprus is not asking anyone to intervene in its favour. We are simply invoking international law and legality, because we believe that a key element of our civilization is not primarily the pursuit of our self-interests, but the support of legality. It would be more appropriate if we said that our true collective interest is to support legality and the rule of law on the international stage.

The President (*spoke in Chinese*): I now give the floor to the representative of Romania.

Mrs. Miculescu (Romania): I would first like to wish your country and nation, Mr. President, a happy, peaceful and prosperous new year. Romania joins others in thanking China for preparing and organizing today's thought-provoking debate on the eve of the seventieth anniversary of the Charter of the United Nations. This is indeed an excellent opportunity for United Nations Members to reaffirm, individually and collectively, their commitment to the purposes and principles of the United Nations founding treaty. Romania, of course, is honoured to firmly re-state its original pledge.

I align myself with the statements delivered earlier on behalf of the European Union and by the Ambassador of Austria on behalf of the Group of Friends of the Rule of Law, and would like to add a few thoughts in my national capacity.

Reflecting on history, let us go back for a few seconds to the moment 70 years ago when United States President Harry Truman addressed the national delegates gathered in San Francisco. He recalled the brave women and men who gave their lives so that future generations could live in a secure world ruled by justice. "Let us labour", he said, "to achieve a peace which is really worthy of their great sacrifice." Achieving a peace worthy of their sacrifice is a commandment we are still bound to and challenged by today. After 70 years of working together, and 70 years since the end of the Second World War, mistrust between States has not completely disappeared, to put it mildly.

The myriad conflicts we are witnessing today — from Ukraine to the frozen one in the Transnistrian region, from Nagorno-Karabakh to Abkhazia and Ossetia, to name just a few, in addition to heinous phenomena such as the spread of radicalization and terrorism — require that the United Nations and the international community remain vigilant and strive tirelessly to provide relief through common action. While the security landscape has fundamentally changed, the core of our collective security system is the same. The ban on the use of force in international relations is as valid today as it was in 1945. The necessity of common action is as valid today as it was 70 years ago, while of course exponentially enhanced by the speed of interaction in a globalized world. In that context, my country reaffirms the importance of the resolution of all conflicts, without differentiation, on the same basis — respect for the principles of the Charter of the United Nations, the norms and principles of international law, the sovereignty and territorial integrity of States within their internationally recognized borders, and in a framework of negotiations conducted in good faith and in inclusive formats.

Promoting the rule of law in international relations has been a constant aim of Romanian foreign policy. One example is that on, 5 February, the Romanian Senate unanimously enacted a law accepting the compulsory jurisdiction of the International Court of Justice. It will soon enter into force, enabling a declaration of acceptance to be deposited with the Secretariat as a token of Romania's full commitment to international law and its recognition of the Court's prominent contribution to international peace.

The international community has repeatedly called in question the strategies and instruments used by the United Nations in fulfilling its mandate, including with regard to the maintenance of international peace and security. That does not mean that the principles of the Charter are being questioned, but that the capacity to provide prompt and efficient responses to threats and challenges needs constant improvement and enhancement. Romania considers the role of regional actors to be an essential element of a well-functioning, efficient and legitimate collective-security system. While the Council retains the primary responsibility for the maintenance of peace and security, regional organizations are increasingly recognized as being instrumental in the prevention, resolution and management of conflicts. In our view, mutually beneficial cooperation could be ensured by even more active and continuous engagement on the part of the Security Council, capable of acting in a united and cooperative manner.

Chapter VIII of the Charter of the United Nations spells out the principles that guide partnerships with regional arrangements and agencies. The Charter provides no precise definition of regional organizations, thus allowing for a variety of cooperative efforts. It is clear by now that such cooperative efforts should be undertaken with willing and capable partners, in order to ensure success.

In 2005, Romania put forward what later became the Council's first resolution to address cooperation between the United Nations and regional organizations in maintaining international peace and security. We are still convinced today — this year, when my country will celebrate 60 years of United Nations membership — that developing strong, flexible partnerships with regional actors will assist the Council in discharging its increasingly diversified duties, both efficiently and legitimately.

The huge loss and suffering that led to the establishment of the Organization was a tribute to the fundamental values of justice and human dignity. We must continue working together to achieve a peace worthy of that sacrifice. I leave participants with the thoughts of the outstanding Romanian diplomat Nicolae Titulescu, the only twice-elected President of the League of Nations, who said, "Each of us has a mission. Together, how can we fail to succeed?"

The President (*spoke in Chinese*): I now give the floor to the representative of Indonesia.

Mr. Percaya (Indonesia): Let me first thank you, Mr. President, for organizing this open debate. We recognize that the theme of this discussion is very important as well as timely, particularly in conjunction with this year's marking of the seventieth anniversary of the founding of the United Nations. Indeed, Indonesia's Constitution, which was developed by our founding fathers also 70 years ago, reflects in many ways the spirit that motivated the creation of this global Organization. Let me quote some parts of the preamble of the Indonesian Constitution.

> "Whereas independence is the inalienable right of all nations, therefore, all colonialism in the world must be abolished ... as it is not in conformity with humanity and justice".

Furthermore, our Constitution mandates our nation to the implementation of "a world order based on freedom, perpetual peace and social justice". Those parts of our Constitution provide clear guidelines on the conduct of our foreign policy. In adhering to the implementation of its constitutional mandate, Indonesia has been relentless.

In 1955, we organized the Asian-African Conference in Bandung to mobilize solidarity and to support nations under colonial Powers in achieving their independence. The Conference, which constitutes an important stepping stone in the establishment of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries in 1961, was also intended to promote global peace, security and prosperity based on the principle of the sovereign equality of all nations. The outcome of the Bandung Conference included a 10-point declaration on the promotion of world peace and cooperation, the first point of which states, "Respect for fundamental human rights and for the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations".

A number of independent States have emerged since then, making up the majority of the United Nations membership today. However, despite the Charter of the United Nations and the United Nations system's growing normative and operational frameworks in peace, human rights and security, the greatest challenge remains the maintenance of peace and security. The United Nations, and the international community in general, has unfortunately fallen short in ensuring that the Palestinian people exercise their inalienable rights and their right to independence from the foreign occupying Power.

It cannot be denied that throughout its history the Organization did not effectively tackle and did not succeed in preventing many armed conflicts, genocides and other international tragedies. As we understand, the United Nations was founded to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war, to promote peace, curb aggression, regulate diplomatic affairs, set an international code of law, nurture collective social development and foster prosperity. What is crucial is that the United Nations continues to reinvent itself to adjust to changing challenges and strategic environments, through persistent reform. However, it needs to deliver on the rightful expectations of the global citizenry. In that context, some reforms have worked well, while others have stalled. The Organization can certainly do better, and in some areas, as in conflict resolution and nuclear disarmament, it must fight for greater relevance.

Indonesia underscores the peaceful settlement of disputes and giving higher priority to political dialogue, mediation and diplomacy, while consistently upholding human rights, the rule of law and the Charter of the United Nations. We emphasize the peaceful resolution of conflicts also because we have reaped direct benefits from it in our once restive province of Aceh. We continue to work diligently to promote the peaceful settlement of disputes regionally and internationally. To that end, the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) has been tremendously important in our region. We fully support a strong partnership between the United Nations and ASEAN and between the United Nations and other relevant regional and subregional organizations.

On its part, Indonesia will continue to contribute tirelessly to help enhance international peace and security. In line with our constitutional obligation, Indonesia has participated in United Nations peacekeeping missions from as early as the 1950s. Many Indonesian troops have served as Blue Helmets across the different continents. There are currently 1,850 Indonesian peacekeepers deployed with nine United Nations peacekeeping operations. Indonesia is aiming to become among the top 10 contributing countries. To achieve that goal by 2019, we have implemented strategies under the so-called Road Map for Vision 4,000 Peacekeepers.

In the light of the current world challenges, Indonesia plans to hold in April a commemoration of the sixtieth anniversary of the Asian-African Conference, to reaffirm the Bandung principles. It will include an Asia-Africa summit to bring countries in the two continents closer and to strengthen cooperation while utilizing advantages derived from commonalities and diversities to contribute to global peace and security, the eradication of poverty and achieving sustainable development.

The United Nations must become the true pivot of the international effort to engender shared goodwill, fraternity and peace. Throughout the history of its existence, the Organization has made progress in some areas while suffering setbacks in others. We must all fully exercise our responsibilities to ensure that the United Nations fulfils its promise. That will require achieving significant progress in Security Council reform without further delay. The Council must reflect the realities of the twenty-first century. Indonesia wishes to see a Council that can demonstrate clearly that it is representative, democratic, transparent, accountable and efficient and serves the interests and is responsive to the concerns of the entire international community, rather than a select few. While recognizing some strong differences on reform, we believe that there are also some quite workable proposals, such as the French proposal to regulate the use of the veto in situations of crimes against humanity. We believe that, with greater political will and mutually respectful dialogue, meaningful progress can be made.

In conclusion, Indonesia strongly believes that the Organization is the best hope for multilateralism. The purposes and principles set out in the Charter remain valid. We must spare no effort to strengthen the United Nations for a more fair, peaceful and prosperous world.

The President (*spoke in Chinese*): I now give the floor to the representative of Thailand.

Mr. Bamrungphong (Thailand): Thailand welcomes the timely convening of this open debate, as this year marks the seventieth anniversary of the founding of the United Nations. We thank the Secretary-General for his informative briefing.

The four main purposes for the establishment of the United Nations are clearly and well set out in Chapter I of the Charter. During the past 70 years, the United Nations has experienced both successes and failures in achieving its original objectives. While we have made considerable progress on the development front, the maintenance of peace and security in many parts of the world and the promotion of respect for human rights and for fundamental freedoms for all, without distinction as to race, sex, language or religion, seem to have met serious challenges. History has shown that success or failure in achieving the objectives of the United Nations heavily depends upon two key questions, among others. First, does the United Nations live up to its responsibility? Secondly, do Member States respect the principles and fulfil their obligations under the Charter of the United Nations? Allow me to give some examples.

Massacres in various countries could have been prevented if the United Nations had transcended political divides so as to undertake swift responses, or if it had had adequate resources to fulfil its mandates. They could have also been prevented if the relevant Member States had adhered to the principles of the Charter to respect human and equal rights and to abide by international law. Lessons learned from those tragic incidents compel us to do our utmost not to let history repeat itself. In that respect, Thailand commends the Secretary-General for his Human Rights Up Front initiative, and the relevant United Nations mechanisms for their continued efforts to protect civilians and to prevent the repetition of such horrible tragedies.

We are witnessing emerging and chronic intra-national and international conflicts caused by acts of aggression, disrespect for State sovereignty and territorial integrity, and intolerance of religious faiths and cultural differences. Many innocent people are deliberately executed simply because they profess different religions, faiths and beliefs. Villagers are forced to leave their homes merely because they are of different races and tribes. Perpetrators have not been brought to justice. There continue to be the unilateral use of force and military intervention without the Security Council's authorization. All of those examples serve to clearly demonstrate that we have not yet achieved the noble goals of the United Nations and that the Charter has not been fully observed and respected.

The priority of the United Nations and the international community of today is to achieve social equality, respect for and promotion of human rights, sovereign equality and tolerance to prevent the spread of extremism and terrorism. To address those key issues, some may believe that the Charter, which first came into force in 1945, may be outdated and no longer relevant. Thailand believes otherwise. The principles and provisions stipulated therein remain universal, applicable and relevant. To deal with those pressing issues effectively, what we need are new working methods, approaches and measures, in accordance with the Charter and international law. Thailand encourages continued discussion in various forums among Member States, the relevant United Nations organs and civil society on this important topic.

National interest remains the supreme and uncompromising goal of every country and is often referred to when foreign, military, economic and even cultural policies are being formulated. However, one possible approach to prevent conflict and uproot terrorism and extremism is to realize and attach more importance to the term "mutual", where we regard equal sovereignty and rights and appreciate different values. The world today is in real need of mutual interest, mutual respect and mutual understanding.

In conclusion, Thailand has always believed that the four original objectives of the founding of United Nations can be achieved if all Member States fully respect and adhere to the principles enshrined in the Charter. I should like to reaffirm Thailand's commitment to fulfil our obligations as set forth by the Charter for our joint effort to maintain peace and security and to allow peace to prevail.

The President (*spoke in Chinese*): I now give the floor to the representative of Burundi.

Mr. Shingiro (Burundi) (*spoke in French*): First of all, allow me to thank you and your country, Mr. President, for having organized this important and very interesting open debate on the theme "Maintenance of international peace and security: Reflect on history, reaffirm the strong commitment to the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations".

Burundi is pleased to have been associated, following the rebirth of its democracy in 2005, with the peacekeeping activities of the United Nations and the African Union. Burundi is the top African francophone troop-contributing country to peacekeeping operations in several conflict areas across the world. Its military and police personnel work courageously each day under the blue flag of the United Nations and under the green flag of the African Union, so as to re-establish peace in troubled areas, notably in Somalia and the Central African Republic.

It is our turn to return the favour to the international community, which participated in the restoration and consolidation of peace in my country after several years of unprecedented crises and war. It is then understandable that the deployment of our troops to peacekeeping operations is our way of thanking the international community, which has remained at Burundi's side as much in time of peace as in time of war.

Since the 1990s, peacekeeping operations have become the rule rather than the exception so as to re-establish peace and stability, especially in regions targeted by internal conflicts, such as in our region of the African Great Lakes. The nature of the mandates of those operations has evolved throughout the decades and has been constantly changing. At the same time, the implementation mechanisms have become increasingly complex, which means that the challenges the Organization must face continue to multiply.

Nothing can be done without security, yet everything becomes possible when security is guaranteed and extends throughout the national territory. In that regard, the early mobilization of sufficient resources for capacity-building and the financing of related activities, such as disarmament, demobilization and reintegration (DDR), are key to any security sector reform. In that regard, Burundi welcomes the success of its own DDR programme, which allowed for the proper integration of foreign rebels into the regular army. Thanks to that successful integration, Burundi now has defence and security forces that are truly national and inclusive, and currently help to maintain peace in several hotspot areas. Burundi stands ready to share the experience of its DDR programe with other nations in the framework of a tripartite partnership that would include Burundi, the country concerned, and the United Nations and/or the African Union.

Extending mandates for existing operations and establishing new operations must be done in strict accordance with the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations, in particular respect for the sovereignty, territorial integrity and political independence of States, and non-intervention in domestic affairs. Moreover, it is necessary to comply with the basic principles adopted by the General Assembly with respect to those operations, such as the consent of the parties, impartiality, and the non-use of force except in self-defence.

As we all know, a large number of peacekeeping operations are mandated to protect civilians. We reiterate that the primary responsibility for the protection of civilians falls to sovereign States, except in the event of mass atrocities, such as genocide, crimes against humanity or ethnic cleansing. The protection of civilians cannot serve as a pretext to promote a change of regime, a military intervention or any other act that would run counter to the provisions of the Charter of the United Nations. In that respect, it is important to continue to strengthen dialogue among countries that host peacekeeping operations, troop-contributing countries, the Secretariat and the Security Council.

Burundi believes that peacekeeping is an important tool of the United Nations for resolving conflict situations around the world, and we believe in that tool. However, peacekeeping does not replace other, more cost-effective mechanisms already in existence, such as preventive diplomacy and political efforts to settle disputes peacefully before they happen. We underscore that when establishing a peacekeeping operation or extending the mandate of an existing operation, there is a need to adhere to the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations and the basic principles that govern those operations. We must, inter alia, respect the principles of sovereign equality, political independence, territorial integrity, and non-intervention in domestic affairs.

It cannot be said enough that cooperation among the Security Council, the Secretariat and troop-contributing countries is key to the success of peacekeeping operations. The role played by troop-contributing countries, whose soldiers risk their lives for peace in the overall peacekeeping process, and the importance of their full participation in the development of policy or reaching of decisions related to troops, the mandate and the composition of peacekeeping operations can hardly be underestimated.

The provision of any financial and logistical support necessary to peacekeeping operations is essential to ensure that their mandates are successfully carried out. The financing of peacekeeping operations should not become a burden for troop-contributing countries.

While reaffirming that the primary responsibility for maintaining international peace and security rests with the Security Council, it is imperative to continue to strengthen cooperation between the United Nations and regional and subregional organizations in resolving conflict and post-conflict situations through joint efforts in conflict prevention and settlement, peacekeeping and peacebuilding. The ongoing cooperation between the United Nations and the African Union is testimony to the potential of cooperation between the United Nations and other regional organizations. This cooperation between the United Nations and the African Union should be continued, strengthened and made lasting.

Given the short amount of time allotted to discuss this extremely broad and relevant topic, allow me to briefly make some concrete proposals in the framework of our shared goal to improve United Nations peacekeeping operations. This is not an exhaustive list.

First, in the context of maintaining multidimensional peacekeeping operations, peacebuilding elements can be incorporated quickly. Any strategy for peacebuilding must be based on national experience and planned in a consistent and cross-cutting manner to ensure that it is in line with the needs of the country in question, and with the principle of national ownership and priorities set by national authorities. To that end, the views of the host country and the lessons learned by and best practices of troop-contributing countries may prove necessary to determine the real needs of field missions.

Secondly, we recall that women play a key role in conflict prevention and rebuilding broken societies. In that respect, we advocate for the systematic inclusion of women throughout the process of settlement of disputes, mediation, community recovery and local administration after conflict.

Thirdly, it is crucial to ensure that United Nations peacekeeping operations and those mandated by the United Nations — such as the African Union Mission to Somalia and, more recently, the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali and the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic — have clearly defined and adequately resourced mandates, objectives and chains of command that are based on a realistic assessment of the situation on the ground. We believe that each mission must take into account the needs and priorities of the countries concerned, in cooperation with national authorities, from the earliest stages of the mission planning process.

Fourthly, we call for strengthened and sustained dialogue and cooperation among the Security Council, the troop- and police-contributing countries, and the Secretariat in order to meet peacekeeping challenges in a spirit of partnership, cooperation and mutual trust.

Fifthly and finally, we call on the Security Council to continue to support regional and subregional initiatives so as to strengthen their ability to contribute to efforts to maintain international peace and security. We have witnessed the important role that the African Union and subregional organizations — such as the Intergovernmental Authority on Development, the Southern African Development Community, the Economic Community of West African States, the East African Community and the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region, whose headquarters are in Bujumbura — have played in the area of peacekeeping and conflict resolution.

The President (*spoke in Chinese*): I call on the representative of the Netherlands.

Mr. Van Oosterom (Netherlands): Let me express our deep appreciation to the People's Republic of China for organizing this important and rich open debate.

I align myself with the statement made by the observer of the European Union, as well as with the statement made by the representative of Austria on behalf of the Group of Friends of the Rule of Law. I will deliver an abridged version of my statement; the full version will be available via Twitter.

The Kingdom of the Netherlands has valued the United Nations since its inception 70 years ago as an institution indispensable to the achievement of global peace, justice and development. With that in mind, I will focus on conflict prevention, the use of the veto and the peaceful settlement of disputes.

The best way to maintain peace and security is to prevent conflicts from happening — a point just made by our colleague from Burundi. The primary responsibility to prevent conflicts, of course, lies with the State. At the same time, the international community also shares in that responsibility. We call upon the Council to use the tools mentioned in Chapter VI of the Charter to prevent conflicts.

A crucial element of conflict prevention is immediate action on the part of the Council in response to early warning. Leadership, clear procedures and means to act are necessary. That is especially so when there are signals that large-scale human rights violations or mass atrocities are about to take place. The Council has a special responsibility to protect in that context.

The Kingdom of the Netherlands also welcomes a more forward-looking role for the Secretary-General in relation to the Council — for instance, through regular briefings to the Council in which he can raise issues of concern, even if they are not yet formally on the agenda of the Council. The mediation work of the Secretary-General could be further enhanced. We also believe that the interaction between Council members and other United Nations Members could be further improved.

My second point concerns the use of the veto. We have been witness too often to mass atrocities in situations where preventive measures failed. On occasion the Council has been unable to act to address such situations because of the contentious use of the veto. In our view, in those situations the use of the veto by the permanent members of the Council ought to be limited. In that respect, we agree with the statement delivered earlier by the Permanent Representative of the Maldives, which was very clear. We therefore continue to laud and support the French initiative for a voluntary code of conduct for the five permanent members to abstain from using the veto in such situations.

We believe that the peaceful settlement of disputes is a vital tool in the prevention of conflicts. Chapter VI of the Charter of the United Nations recognizes that crucial objective. The Kingdom of the Netherlands is deeply committed to the peaceful settlement of disputes, with a special emphasis on judicial settlements. Among other institutions, the Kingdom is proud to host the International Court of Justice and the Permanent Court of Arbitration at The Hague, the legal capital of the world. We strongly encourage the Council to take measures to expand the use of the peaceful settlement of disputes, both in relation to State and non-State actors.

Under Articles 34 and 36 of the Charter, the Council can recommend that parties settle their disputes peacefully. The Council can also suggest the specific form it deems most suitable and request to be briefed about the results. In cases where the International Court of Justice has jurisdiction, the Council can also strongly urge the parties to take their disputes to the Court. The Council could also encourage parties to accept the Court's jurisdiction when the Court does not yet have jurisdiction.

The Netherlands has full confidence in the quality of the dispute settlement mechanisms mentioned in the Charter. We strongly believe that States should not only submit themselves to those mechanisms, but also should abide by the decisions taken through them.

In conclusion, the Netherlands strongly believes in its partnership with the United Nations for peace, justice and development. It is that firm belief that serves as the foundation of our candidature for a non-permanent seat on the Security Council for the 2017-2018 term. The Netherlands is ready to play its part as a constructive partner in the Council in the pursuit of the maintenance of international peace and security. Let me end by quoting a speech delivered by my Minister for Foreign Affairs, Albert Koenders, last week in which he quoted Willy Brandt: "Peace is not everything, but everything is nothing without peace."

The President (*spoke in Chinese*): I now give the floor to the representative of Uruguay.

Mr. Rivas (Uruguay) (*spoke in Spanish*): At the outset, I would like to congratulate you, Mr. President, for convening this open debate, which we believe is very timely as this year we will commemorate the seventieth anniversary of the establishment of the United Nations. I also thank you for the concept note *(S/2015/87, annex)* that has been circulated for this purpose.

This debate allows us to reaffirm Uruguay's commitment to the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations and, at the same time, provides us an opportunity to reflect on where we stand today, given that we note with concern that we are still far from fully fulfilling those purposes and principles.

Uruguay aligns itself with the statement delivered by the representative of the Maldives on behalf of the Accountability, Coherence and Transparency Group.

In the task of maintaining peace and security, Uruguay, as founding Member of the United Nations, reaffirms the principles enshrined in the Charter of San Francisco in 1945. While the international context has significantly changed since then, those principles remain fundamental principles that form a framework of basic rights and obligations. The principle of the sovereign equality of States is the cornerstone of the multilateral system that unites us today. By the same token, the principle of non-intervention in the internal affairs of States is a fundamental value, as it is safeguards the sovereign equality, territorial integrity and self-determination of States.

As stated in the Preamble of the Charter, the Organization was founded to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war. However, we note with regret that we are far from achieving the goals of peace and security enshrined in the Charter.

Uruguay is concerned about the fact that the purposes and principles of the Charter are not observed in various areas of the world where they are still challenged by activities that contradict them. That not only affects international peace and security, but also has an impact on the system as a whole and endangers its very foundations. The fact that an unprecedented 120,000 military, police and civilian personnel are deployed in various missions demonstrates that the task of peacekeeping remains enormous and is growing.

The consent of the State concerned is a guiding principle of peacekeeping operations, which ensures their legitimacy. However, we are aware that currently most armed conflicts are intra-State in nature and that, in some cases in which the most basic values and human rights are threatened, one cannot adopt the most extreme interpretation of sovereignty because that would amount to impunity. We acknowledge that is the primary responsibility of the State to protect its population. However, when that responsibility is not fulfilled and there is an imminent threat of genocide, war crimes, crimes against humanity or ethnic cleansing, non-intervention gives way to the involvement of the international community.

Uruguay's commitment to international peace and security is tangible, inter alia through our significant contributions to peacekeeping operations in which it is participating, not only to achieve those goals but also through the categorical, ethic and moral imperative of solidarity with brotherly countries of the region and with other nations that must face serious situations of conflict and instability. Uruguay's commitment is not new, but goes back to the 1950s and 1960s, when my Government decided to send military observers to missions in the Sinai Peninsula and in India and Pakistan and then increased its participation until the number of Uruguayan Blue Helmets exceeded 2,000 in 2013.

In that regard, it is worth mentioning the role of Uruguay in the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, where approximately 1,000 of its troops are participating, and in the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti, where not only does it have troops on the ground, but it also chairs the Group of Friends of Haiti.

To achieve lasting peace we must address the underlying causes of conflict, and therefore promote development in all its dimensions and the defence, promotion and protection of human rights. The political stability, democratic governance and territorial integrity of States are necessary conditions for conflict prevention. At the same time, strengthening the rule of law, protecting and promoting human rights and ensuring sustainable economic and social development, equality, social inclusion and the elimination of poverty also contribute to the prevention of conflicts and post-conflict peacebuilding.

In conclusion, while we recognize the primary role that the Charter entrusts to the Security Council in the difficult task of maintaining international peace and security, we also recognize the complementary role that is entrusted to regional and subregional bodies. As a member of the Union of South American Nations, a cooperation and political consultation body that has played an important role in preventing conflicts and finding peaceful settlements to disputes, Uruguay is part of a zone of peace that puts its trust in preventive diplomacy as an effective tool.

The President (*spoke in Chinese*): I now give the floor to Papua New Guinea.

Mr. Aisi (Papua New Guinea): We thank your delegation, Mr. President, for convening this important open debate on the topic "Maintenance of international peace and security: Reflect on history, reaffirm the strong commitment to the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations".

As we celebrate the seventieth anniversary of the founding of the United Nations, Papua New Guinea will celebrate its fortieth year of independence and membership in the Organization. When we joined, on 10 October 1975, our country committed "to the maintenance of peace throughout our region and the world and to our undertaking to uphold the principles of the Charter of the United Nations". Indeed, that commitment has been reaffirmed time and again by our leaders at successive general debates at the General Assembly. It will continue to be maintained along with the reaffirmation of our commitment to the rule of law and support for the principle of non-interference in the internal affairs of sovereign States, as noted in Article 2, paragraph 7 of the United Nations Charter. Furthermore, we support the initiative by France on restraint in the use of the veto in relation to mass atrocities. However, we would further propose that this very important issue be discussed in the General Assembly in order to garner the widest possible support for the initiative from the States Members of the United Nations.

We strongly support the statement in the Chinese delegation's concept note that countries

> "big or small, strong or weak, rich or poor, are all equal members of the international community, and they are all entitled to participate in international affairs on an equal footing." (*S/2015/87, annex, p. 3*)

That reaffirms Article 2, paragraph 1, of the United Nations Charter, which underlines the sovereign equality of all States Members of the United Nations. We thank all Member States, as we reaffirm this important principle. In that regard, I would especially refer to the statement made this morning by the Foreign Minister of New Zealand, who noted the fact that we — in this context I think he was referring to the Council — "should listen to the United Nations membership, including the smaller members, which are often not heard". He further said that "we should hear their disappointment and their frustration" (*supra, p. 8*). We submit that hearing all voices would indeed enhance the concept of win-win cooperation, which today's debate seeks to promote.

Former Secretary-General Kofi Annan underlined the important nexus between development and security when he stated that there can be no security without development and no development without security, along with the recognition of the importance of human rights within that context. As we move towards the adoption of the post-2015 development agenda, we must also ensure the continued implementation of the Millennium Development Goals as an important component of the sustainable development goals. Development has to be a critical part of the proposal on win-win cooperation. To recognize that would be a reaffirmation of the "beautiful vision set forth in the Charter" (*supra, p. 4*), as noted earlier by the Foreign Minister of China.

Part of the development paradigm must recognize the need to address the serious adverse impacts of climate change. This issue has been raised by the Pacific small island developing States in the context of threats to their sustainable development and ultimately their existence. To that end, the Pacific small island developing States proposed the resolution entitled "Climate change and its possible security implications" (General Assembly resolution 63/281), which the Assembly adopted in 2009 and which notes the link between security and climate change. Paragraph 1 of that resolution invites

> "the relevant organs of the United Nations, as appropriate and within their respective mandates, to intensify their efforts in considering and addressing climate change, including its possible security implications".

Along with the need to respect and recognize the planet's limits, we recognize the nature of climate change to be a threat multiplier, with the potential to aggravate certain existing threats to international peace and security. In that regard, among other important issues, in 2011 the Security Council expressed in a presidential statement its concern

> "that possible security implications of loss of territory of some States caused by sea-level-rise may arise, in particular in small low-lying island States." (*S/PRST/2011/15, p. 2*)

The United Nations is the only global institutions that provides each Member State an equal voice. Today's debate has strongly reaffirmed that proposition.

In conclusion, during his recent visit with the Pacific island developing States leaders in Fiji, President Xi Jinping reaffirmed, "we shall be good partners of win-win cooperation and common development" and added that China would continue to provide support and assistance to the Pacific small island developing States, and for that we are all grateful.

The President (*spoke in Chinese*): I now give the floor to the representative of Ecuador.

Mr. Lasso Mendoza (Ecuador) (*spoke in Spanish*): Before beginning my statement, I would like express to you, Mr. President, my best wishes on the occasion of the lunar new year. I also wish to extend my best wishes to all who are celebrating that holiday. I also wish to congratulate China for having proposed a subject for today's open debate that is particularly relevant as we prepare to celebrate the seventieth anniversary of the founding of the United Nations.

The United Nations emerged as a response of the international community to the horrors of a war whose fronts spanned almost two thirds of the planet and which killed about 75 million people. Approximately 40 million of them were civilians — many victims of genocide, mass bombings, disease and famine. The end of that war also saw the first military use of an atomic weapon, which, in the hands of a few Powers today, has the ability to wipe out all of humankind.

The world's people, through their Governments, in order to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war — as the Preamble of the Charter of the United Nations puts it — created this Organization based on several fundamental principles of international relations and endowed its bodies with different functions, including the General Assembly, where all Member States of the Organization participate, and the Security Council, to which the States assigned the main function of maintaining international peace and security. Effective action by the Security Council requires that its actions be based on respect for the principles on which the United Nations was created and framed in the functions and powers that the Charter gives it. The purposes and principles are the measuring rod against which the actions of the Council are to be judged.

Among the primary purposes set forth in the Charter of the Organization are the maintenance of international peace and security and the peaceful settlement of disputes. Efforts to achieve those purposes must be carried out in conformity with the principles set out in Article 2, the first of which is the sovereign equality of States. That principle, together with the principle of non-intervention in the internal affairs of States, is a guarantee for the independence of all our countries and protection against the ambitions of States that, given their economic or military might, aim to impose social systems and their recipes for development on other nations.

The first concern of the Council, as guarantor of international peace and security, must be that the principles of sovereign equality and non-interference in the internal affairs of other States are respected. There is no shortage of examples in the recent history of the world where lack of respect for those principles, even in some cases under authorization of the Security Council, has led to situations of greater political, military and economic insecurity,as compared to what existed prior to foreign interventions, as in certain cases — I reiterate — when the Council itself was unable to prevent unilateral military interventions.

Although the Charter of the United Nations, with the aim of preserving international peace and security, envisioned a series of mechanisms that should be used, we find an increase in the number of resolutions adopted by the Security Council under the provisions of Chapter VII of the Charter. We would like to make an appeal that in circumstances of conflict and potential threats to international peace and security what should be used, with a sufficiently gradual approach and based on subsidiarity, are the provisions of Chapter VI on the peaceful settlement of disputes and the principles of Chapter VIII on regional agreements.

I would like to recall that Ecuador is part of an area of peace declared by the Heads of State and Government of the Community of Latin America and Caribbean States. By the same token, the Secretary-General has the prestige of his Office at his disposal to exercise preventive diplomacy with the aim of avoiding the deteriorating conditions of instability wherever they arise.

The President (*spoke in Chinese*): I now give the floor to the representative of the Philippines.

Mrs. Natividad (Philippines): Allow me to extend the Philippines' appreciation to China, which hold the presidency of the Security Council for the month of February, for convening this open debate on a topic that is most relevant and at the very core of the existence of the United Nations.

Eight months from today, the United Nations will mark the seventieth year of its establishment. It was born out of our collective desire for peace, our mutual interest to end the scourge of war and our shared goal to achieve prosperity through peace. With the number of countries facing crises at a record high and current conflicts causing the loss of thousands of innocent lives, the destruction of property and the displacement of families and putting extraordinary strain on global resources, it is almost impossible to imagine a world where no global body exists fully devoted and committed to maintaining international peace and security. As former United States President Dwight D. Eisenhower said in 1961,

> "With all its defects, with all the failures that we can check up against it, the United Nations still represents man's best-organized hope to substitute the conference table for the battlefield."

Yet, the United Nations can only be as effective and useful as its Member States make it. It is therefore incumbent upon each of us to keep the letter and spirit of the Charter of the United Nations alive amid new and persistent challenges.

The Philippines aligns itself with the statements delivered by the representative of Iran on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement, and by the Permanent Representative of Austria on behalf of the Group of Friends on the Rule of Law. The Philippines has consistently called for the rule of law, as embedded in the Charter, to be at the forefront of our collective resolve to achieve peace.

The Philippines believes that the promotion of global peace primarily starts at home. The international community has witnessed our unwavering commitment and tireless efforts to bring about and build peace in the southern Philippines. We started a long journey towards achieving lasting peace in that part of the country and, despite recent setbacks, the Philippine Government, as well as all the relevant stakeholders in the peace process, remains steadfastly committed to the goal of one day seeing a peaceful and prosperous Muslim Mindanao come to fruition. To step back and reverse all the progress made is not an option. We are grateful to the international community and to the United Nations, which have given their strong support throughout the whole process, for their continued confidence.

While we settle outstanding issues concerning the Mindanao peace process, we are facing an equally challenging task of resolving tensions in our regional seas. The Philippines has resorted to the rule of law in trying to resolve those tensions, and believes that the core instrument for resolving maritime disputes is the 1982 United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS). We have kept the international community apprised of our position on, and developments in, the peaceful settlement of disputes in the West Philippine Sea and the South China Sea, an issue that is undoubtedly and unquestionably of global concern. The Philippines has resorted to arbitration to clarify maritime entitlements and settle maritime disputes peacefully through UNCLOS. Arbitration is fully entrenched in Chapter VI, Article 33, of the Charter of the United Nations, on the pacific settlement of disputes.

We have called for, and reiterate our call, for a stop to all reclamation activities in the disputed areas and the acceleration of talks on a legally binding code of conduct in the South China Sea. Massive reclamation is a direct threat to the Philippines and other claimant States. It should be considered a great concern for all States, as it threatens the security and overall peace and stability in the region. Moreover, the massive reclamation, which is causing widespread destruction of the region's biodiversity, will also irreparably damage the entire ecological balance in the West Philippine Sea and the South China Sea. Such irreversible damage will have long-term effects on all the peoples across geopolitical boundaries who have depended on the sea for their livelihoods for generations. It is equally incumbent upon us to ensure the safety of those peoples, who have been peacefully, sustainably and legitimately pursuing their livelihoods in those areas. Those whose actions endanger the lives of those peoples and those who do not heed the call for restraint are not being true to the cause of peace.

It is unfortunate that some of us here have forgotten the horrors of wars, have undertaken actions that undermine peace and security in our regions and have rendered meaningless the commitments made in San Francisco in 1945 to

> "practice tolerance and live together in peace as good neighbours and to unite our strength to maintain international peace and security".

Amid all the threats to peace that confront us today, the international community can count on the Philippines to uphold the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations. The United Nations and its Charter have been, and will continue to be, crucial bastions for the voices of all countries to be heard on the global stage.

The President (*spoke in Chinese*): I now give the floor to the representative of Hungary.

Ms. Bogyay (Hungary): Hungary wishes to thank China for convening this highly appropriate open debate of the Security Council, for we cannot pledge enough our commitment to the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations.

It is my privilege to speak here today in the Chamber for the very first time as the new Permanent Representative of Hungary. Much has been said today, and so I would rather focus on three major points: first, the need for, but lack of, real dialogue; secondly, the importance of not forgetting, but learning from, our previous sins; and, thirdly, the need think out of the box and look for new methods in order to succeed in peacemaking.

Talking in tune has always been my aim throughout my professional life. Talking to each other with dignity even when our differences hold sway should be a main preoccupation in turbulent moments for all of us. Indeed, differences in our opinions and visions are at times pronounced, and the spirit of consensus is difficult to bring to bear on some issues. But Hungary would still argue that we should handle our political differences through ongoing dialogue and the art of listening and responding in order at least to try not to misunderstand each other.

"*Dialogos*" does not mean a conversation between two people or two groups, but an acceptance by two or more participants that they will compare and contrast their respective arguments to the end. Dialogue is accordingly a perilous enterprise. In my country's view, the United Nations was created for dialogue, and it must act on the highest possible level for dialogue.

The Council will agree with me that we have to renew our commitment to understanding and tolerating each other's cultural background and identity, keeping in our hearts and minds the verses of Jalal al-Din Rumi, the great thirteenth century Islamic scholar, poet and philosopher, who wrote: "Half of me comes from here; half from everywhere/ Half of me comes from the pearls of the sea; half from distant shores." We, the people of the world, are connected to each other globally, and today our interdependence is greater than ever. We must therefore consciously protect our sensitive peace together and act together against evil for the betterment of the future of our children.

Hungary fully supports the statements delivered on behalf of the European Union and of the Accountability, Coherence and Transparency group.

The founding mothers and fathers of the United Nations and its organs, including the Security Council, wanted to "save succeeding generations from the scourge of war", as we have heard many times today, but they also wanted to achieve more: human rights, the rule of law and development. And, as Nelson Mandela said, there is no peace without development and no development without peace. None of this can be achieved without teaching our children at a very young age to respect and celebrate the diversity of the human race. Only then will grown-ups respect State sovereignty, territorial integrity and the peaceful settlement of international disputes.

We have seen an amazing evolution of humankind since the end of the Second World War. We should never forget the immense developments in the political arena, and we should be proud of them. The United Nations has undeniably had its success stories. It stabilized the security situation in a bipolar world and, in many cases, served as the most important — sometimes the last — hope on the international platform for Member States to overcome their differences.

However, the world has been changing. The world has changed. Only, many people seem no longer to recall why the United Nations had to be set up 70 years ago. Conflicts, bloodshed and human suffering continue. Religious and ethnic minorities are again threatened. People are beheaded because of their religion, nationality and beliefs? Are we going back in time? Only, people do not go to the main square in their towns to watch executions or to the arena to see brutality; we just switch on the television.

The world needs new enlightenment. The United Nations could play the leading role in creating it. Today, the world is in turmoil despite the Security Council never having been busier. Somehow, we do not seem to learn enough from our sins and mistakes, our greediness and selfishness. And the Security Council and the international community seem to be paralysed in many of these situations. But history has already shown us that failure to act will only prolong human suffering and invite further atrocities, and that we will pay a very high price for our inaction in the form of lost lives, lost generations, lost hopes and lost futures.

Our inability to live up to the challenges we face also undermines the trust and belief that people around the world have in the United Nations. They see the world Organization ever more distant and detached from reality. Einstein said that we cannot solve problems by using the same kind of thinking we used when we created them. Based on the lessons learned and reunited by our common values, we must be open to new ideas in order to effectively implement the noble principles of the Charter of the United Nations.

The President (*spoke in Chinese*): I call on the representative of Egypt.

Mr. Mahmoud (Egypt) (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset, I would like to congratulate you, Sir, on the Chinese New Year, and to thank you for having convened this very important debate of the Security Council on the theme "Maintenance of international peace and security: reflect on history, reaffirm the strong commitment to the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations".

This year marks the seventieth anniversary of the end of one of the most abhorrent wars witnessed by world, which claimed millions of victims and led to told suffering. The destruction brought about by the Second World War was not limited to a few parties to the conflict; many nations of the world paid the price of that destruction. Indeed, one of the most important chapters of the War took place in Egypt, where approximately 20 million landmines were left along the northern coastline of the Western Desert. That, too, led to a great deal of bloodshed. The nations of the world emerged from that tragedy more determined than ever to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war, to practice tolerance and to promote social progress, better standards of life and freedom.

The seventieth anniversary of the war and the founding of United Nations is a turning point calling for us to review the history of the Organization. We should take pride in our achievements in the context of peace and security, but we must also learn lessons and learn from the mistakes and shortcomings in the performance of the Organization in the past. In this regard, I would note that we must not believe that the Second World War ended with one victorious party and the defeat of another; the result was a victory for humankind, which determined to build a new world in which efforts to maintain peace and security and to achieve prosperity for all nations were combined.

To that end, Article 24 of the Charter of the United Nations stipulates that the Security Council discharge its mandate on behalf of all Members of the United Nations. In that regard, we need to make greater efforts to reform the working methods of the Council so as to make it more transparent, democratic and representative. We must also end the unfair representation of the African continent so as to improve the work of the Council and its credibility.

Our debate today is an opportunity to reaffirm the principles of sovereignty equality, non-interference in the internal affairs of States, the non-use or threat of use of force and the peaceful settlement of disputes. The Council must uphold those principles in discharging its mandate. It must also support the role of parties and regional organizations in mediation and the facilitation of negotiations and respect national ownership in reconciliation processes.

The threats we are faced with today are no less serious than those the United Nations faced when it was first established. We must therefore develop the tools of our Organization in dealing with conflicts, primarily peacebuilding and peacekeeping operations, but also special diplomatic missions. Such missions may take place under the current review of both the peacebuilding and peacekeeping systems and focus on preventive diplomacy.

The world is today witnessing a number of transnational security threats. At the forefront are the issues of organized crime, trafficking in drugs, people and weapons, and the horrific acts of terrorism that have been committed in many areas around the world, such as those that have taken place recently in Syria, Iraq, Libya, the Sahel and Western Africa.

We do not feel the need to absolve any specific religion of those attempts by ignorant or ill-intentioned parties to link a religion to terrorism. We are confident that the noble and lofty goals and principles that are shared by all religions are able to stand on their own. But we must not be complacent. We must adopt intellectual and practical mechanisms that will enable us to work collectively to face the challenges posed by those extremists, who try to attract more extremists while exploiting religion. I would also like to recall many instances from history. Those who overlook or exploit terrorism for political purposes will be inevitably hurt by terrorism at some point. That is what Egypt reaffirmed lately when it dealt with the threat of terrorism by besieging terrorist groups and cutting off their provision lines.

In conclusion, I must mention the Palestinian cause, which remains unresolved. This state of affairs is in direct contradiction with the principles of the Charter of the United Nations and international legitimacy. We must call for a just and comprehensive peace among the nations of the Middle East and end this injustice, which has been done to the Palestinian people by guaranteeing that they can enjoy their rights, including self-determination and an independent State with Jerusalem as its capital.

The President (*spoke in Chinese*): I call on the representative of Costa Rica.

Ms. Murillo (Costa Rica) (*spoke in Spanish*): Allow me to congratulate China for convening this debate, which gives us an opportunity to reiterate our commitment to the provisions of the Charter of the United Nations. My delegation associates itself with the statements made by the representatives of Maldives on behalf of the Accountability, Consistency and Transparency (ACT) group and Austria on behalf of the Group of Friends of the Rule of Law.

Seventy years after the San Francisco Conference, conflict prevention remains one of the central reasons for the existence of the United Nations. It is undeniable that the maintenance of peace and security is closely linked to the resolution of issues related to development and respect for human rights, which are also central goals of the Organization in accordance with the Charter. Therefore, Costa Rica wishes to make the following comments in its national capacity.

First, it is vital to adjust the Council's work in terms of prevention and the peaceful settlement of disputes. The Security Council has the means necessary to take measures under Chapter VII, but is much less accustomed to adopting peaceful measures under Chapter VI. This must change. As members of the Group of Friends of Mediation, Costa Rica calls for the available preventive diplomacy tools to be used to the maximum extent and highlights the role of regional and subregional organizations in this respect. We also hope that the Council recognizes this and coordinates its work with other United Nations agencies with related competencies.

Secondly, we highlight the link between conflict and serious deteriorations in human rights situations. Such situations, when they occur, should be reported to the relevant entities, including the Security Council. Sovereignty must be understood as belonging to a sovereign State that is responsible for protecting its populations from mass atrocities. In this sense, Costa Rica reiterates its support for the Secretary-General's Rights Up Front initiative. We also reiterate that due account should be taken of the protection of civilians and human rights issues in general in the formulation of peacekeeping mission mandates.

Thirdly, Costa Rica stresses that the Council cannot continue to ignore Article 26 of the Charter, which compels it to develop plans for the establishment of an arms control system to promote the establishment and maintenance of international peace and security through minimizing the diversion of the world's human and economic resources towards weapons. From our point of view, such resources would be better used for development.

Fourthly, Costa Rica urges the Council to use more flexible working methods and thus be more agile in its consideration of situations and more inclusive, on the basis of the principle of the sovereign equality of States. We reiterate our call for the full and systematic implementation of presidential note S/2010/507 and its updates and for the formal adoption of the Council's provisional rules of procedure.

Fifthly, Costa Rica, first as part of the group of five small nations and now as part of the ACT group, has opposed the use of the veto, especially in situations of genocide, crimes against humanity and war crimes. We support the French proposal of a code of conduct on the use of the veto and call on the permanent members to adopt a declaration of principles to mark the seventieth anniversary of the Organization.

Finally, in the lead-up to the appointment of a new Secretary-General, Costa Rica calls for that process to be more inclusive, transparent and democratic. To that end, we must define profiles and hear statements by those who present themselves for election. The General Assembly must hold a vote on at least two candidates who have been preselected by the Council. We must overcome this challenge, extend the election period and make clear that this election will be for a single term. My delegation believes that, in the light of the relevant resolutions of the Assembly and with the strong support of the Council, the Organization, which brings together every State in the world, will find the best person to take on the great challenges of being Secretary-General and to fight tirelessly for the maintenance of international peace and security and the interests and aspirations of humankind.

The President (*spoke in Chinese*): I call on the representative of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea.

Mr. An Myong Hun (Democratic People's Republic of Korea): The delegation of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea expresses its appreciation to China for having organized this open debate on the topic of reaffirming the strong commitment to the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations. We expect that this wide-ranging topic will serve to squarely reflect on the real picture in terms of international peace and security.

The purpose of the United Nations — to maintain international peace and security and develop friendly relations based on respect, the principle of equal rights and the self-determination of peoples — and the principles of the United Nations, which are centred on respect for the sovereign equality of all its Member States, remain valid 70 years after the founding of the United Nations and assume even stronger vitality and relevance in view of today's reality.

Today, an absolute majority of the countries of the world participate in the activities and work of the United Nations as sovereign States with equal rights and qualifications, irrespective of differences in ideology or system, population size and territory, or level of development.

However, the equality of rights and qualifications of sovereign States, that is, sovereign equality, is not yet embodied in the overall work and activities of the United Nations, but rather ignored, even trampled upon. Threats to or infringement upon States' sovereignty, political and social system, genuine human rights and culture are being perpetrated to a dangerous degree, and justice and truth are being trampled under the pretext of democracy, anti-terrorism, the protection of human rights, freedom of expression, non-proliferation and so on. Therefore, world peace and security, which is a main and permanent theme of the United Nations, has not yet been achieved, and challenges to it are increasing.

The United Nations has entrusted the Security Council with the maintenance of international peace and security as its first and foremost responsibility. However, the activities of the Security Council today lag too far behind the principles enshrined in the Charter.

The present reality of the Council is that one permanent member State seeks to act as the world police through either military blocs or bilateral military alliances that have nothing to do with the United Nations, or through abuse of the Security Council. The large-scale military exercises of an aggressive nature conducted by that permanent member against a State Member of the United Nations are ignored, but self-defence capabilities built to defend sovereignty and the right to existence are brought up as a threat to peace and security, and sanctions are imposed.

Satellite launches conducted by some Member States are not questioned, but the same satellite launches by other Member States are questioned. Missile launches conducted by some Member States are not questioned, but the missile launches conducted by other Member States are seriously questioned. The horrible acts of torture committed by that permanent member in other countries are downplayed, but the so-called human rights issues of a Member State, fabricated on the basis of false testimony by those who are morally inhuman, who committed crimes at home and defected, are cast as a threat to peace and security.

The atrocities committed by Israel, which infringe upon the right to self-determination and are aimed at extinguishing the very existence of the Palestinian people, are perpetrated in connivance and even encouraged, but the just demands and hope of the Palestinians to exercise self-determination and to live in their homeland are vetoed by that permanent member.

Twelve years ago, we heard the accusation made by the United States in the Security Council arguing that there were weapons of mass destruction in Iraq. Only after the military invasion took place, followed by continued tragic bloodshed, did the world come to realize that it had been the big lie of the century, whose catastrophic consequences we are still witnessing.

Unless the present circumstances, in which the Security Council is abused to serve the unjust purpose of one permanent member and to justify its actions, are properly addressed, the Security Council will no longer be able to deal with issues of international peace and security in conformity with the aspirations and demands of Member States and the purposes and principles enshrined in the Charter.

The arbitrariness and high-handedness reflected in the actions of the Security Council, due mainly to one permanent member, find their clear manifestation in the situation created on the Korean peninsula. Today the handling of the Korean problem in the Security Council is not oriented towards promoting peace and security on the peninsula, but forced into realizing the strategic aim of the United States to destroy the sovereignty and right to existence of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea.

This year marks the seventieth anniversary of the liberation of Korea and the seventieth year since the artificial division of the Korean nation by foreign forces. In the course of those decades, the world has made tremendous advances and the times have seen dramatic changes. But the Korean nation has not yet achieved reunification, suffering the pain of division. It is a deplorable fact known to all and lamentable to all.

In order to open up a broad avenue to independent reunification this year through the joint efforts of the whole Korean nation, the Government of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea put forward initiatives to remove the danger of war, ease the tension and create a peaceful environment on the Korean peninsula. For its realization, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea requested the United States to stop the large-scale war exercises it conducts continuously throughout the year in South Korea and to fundamentally change its policy, which is hostile to the Democratic People's Republic of Korea.

However, the United States Administration responded by a confrontational announcement to topple the Democratic People's Republic of Korea — to topple the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, and I repeat this phrase because these are the exact words spoken by President Obama — and to continue to conduct war exercises aimed at occupying Pyongyang.

Thus, the United States has completely destroyed the basis of the so-called dialogue it has been talking about, though outwardly, and openly confirmed its strategy of toppling the system of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. It is the policy of the United States Administration to mobilize all possible means — nuclear, human rights, cyberattack, freedom of expression and so on — in order to eliminate the ideology, system and sovereignty of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea.

That is the reality unfolding on the Korean peninsula, where the present situation of world peace and security is consolidated, and that is the position and attitude of one permanent member towards the principle of respect for sovereign equality enshrined in the Charter.

The downgrading of the status quo of the Security Council to a tool of arbitrariness should be redressed, hence an urgent need for comprehensive reform of the Security Council has arisen. The United States must withdraw its unilateral hostile policies against sovereign Member States and refrain from abusing the Security Council for its unjust unilateral purposes. If the Security Council is to demonstrate its serious stance and attitude towards peace and security issues, it will have to duly address the United States war exercises aimed at targeting and toppling a sovereign State and the horrible CIA acts of torture and atrocities committed in other parts of the world.

The Democratic People's Republic of Korea will discharge its responsibility and duty as a State Member of the United Nations to achieve peace and security for all, in conformity with the purposes and principles of the United Nations Charter, and, for the sake of discharging that responsibility and duty, will continue to stand against any move to abuse the United Nations for the pursuit of individual purposes and interests.

The President (*spoke in Chinese*): I now give the floor to the representative of Tunisia.

Mr. Khiari (Tunisia): I would like to congratulate you, Mr. President, on your initiative to convene today's important and thought-provoking open debate on reaffirming our strong commitment to the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations. My delegation also appreciates your insights into the theme, as reflected in the concept note (S/2015/87, annex). I would also like to thank His Excellency the Secretary-General for his briefing and vision on our topic.

Today's debate is taking place as we prepare to celebrate the seventieth anniversary of the founding of the United Nations. The theme of our meeting clearly reflects our aspirations and accomplishments, and should be understood broadly. It provides an opportunity to look back at past achievements and explore ways of strengthening and improving the effectiveness of the United Nations, so as to enable it to fulfil its mandate to preserve peace and security among States and promote human development. In approaching the subject, we should bear in mind that the nature and scope of the United Nations have expanded greatly since 1945.

Since its inception, the United Nations has proved to be a cornerstone of the international peace and security architecture. It has faced many international crises and challenges. It has developed on the basis of its Charter, an international treaty that is concise compared to many others, consisting as it does of fewer than 10,000 words. Its provisions and expressions, carefully selected by the drafters to be of a fairly general nature, have contributed to the emergence of a spirit of compromise that has survived to our own times and has reinforced the multilateral work of the United Nations, laying the ground for the Charter's dynamic and evolutionary interpretation in the light of changing circumstances and our evolving peace and security situation.

One of the most significant issues to be considered from this perspective is terrorism. While the Charter makes no reference to it, the vast array of normative work that has been done to produce multilateral anti-terrorism conventions clearly demonstrates that the Charter was ahead of its time, paving the way for a broad and concerted interpretation of its provisions by Member States. To date, the United Nations has played a significant role in promoting new norms and ensuring the progressive development of international law, thereby creating the conditions necessary to address such global challenges. Despite that, long-unresolved issues, such as the question of Palestine, show clearly that if we are to achieve peace and justice, aggression and usurpation of land must be stopped and colonial rule banished from our world.

A major breakthrough in the strengthening of the Charter's foundations has been the drastic change that has occurred in the interpretation of the term "threat to peace". While in the era immediately after the Second World War it was strictly confined to threats of war between States, it has now been firmly established within the United Nations that threats to peace can also be the result of terrorist acts, the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, a lack of good governance, transnational organized crime, climate change, the spread of pandemics, poverty and so forth. Such challenges represent a far wider array of concerns than the issues that were debated in San Francisco.

From being based on a system of collective security devised to deal with State aggression, the United Nations has adapted to the new realities on the ground by broadening the scope of its action to promote human security and sustainable peace and development. Indeed, promoting international peace, preventing and resolving conflicts and pursuing new norms of global justice are closely linked to the attainment of sustainable development. The demands placed on the United Nations are also more complex. Addressing those interlinked challenges requires joint collective efforts, for no country can resolve them on its own. Our challenge today is to devise more inclusive forms of global governance by reaffirming our commitment to respect for international law and strict adherence to the principles and objectives enshrined in the United Nations Charter. My country, Tunisia, has always called for those principles to be accepted as the cornerstone of relations between nations, and we have built and shaped our foreign policy on those parameters.

Promoting the lofty ideals of the Charter implies that decision-making bodies must reflect the world's new realities. The Security Council is a case in point. We believe that reforming the Council can strengthen international law as a prerequisite for peace, security and development, and will further consolidate the

Council's position as a central component of effective global governance that can promote concerted efforts to address today's challenges.

The President (*spoke in Chinese*): I now give the floor to the representative of Nicaragua.

Mrs. Rubiales de Chamorro (Nicaragua) (*spoke in Spanish*): I would like to thank the People's Republic of China for convening today's debate and for its important concept note (S/2015/87, annex), which has enabled us to reflect on history and reaffirm Member States' commitment to the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations on its seventieth anniversary.

We associate ourselves with the statement delivered by the representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement.

The evolution of world events has only confirmed our deepest fears. We have reached a critical juncture for civilization, and States are finding that their peace and security are permanently endangered. We must erase from our minds and our hearts all thoughts of war and the culture of war, of violence, interference and intervention, and replace them with a mindset and a culture that value peace and prosperity for all.

We emphasize the importance of committing to and strengthening the maintenance of peace and security, particularly in these very dangerous times our world is living through. No Member State can arrogate to itself the right to the use or the threat of the use of force in international relations. The exceptionalist policies of which many of us have been victims in recent years must end, for they only create more conflicts and threaten people's peace and security. We will never tire of reiterating that conflicts are resolved through dialogue and political negotiation, and that the United Nations, based on its raison d'être and its Charter, must shoulder its historical responsibility and lead the world in promoting and ensuring world peace and rejecting warmongering policies, war and confrontation. Given the challenges we face, it is becoming increasingly imperative for us to thoroughly reform the United Nations so that it can be a forum in which we all participate, have our voices heard and possess the power to decide all matters affecting the interests of our peoples and in turn of world peace and humankind.

Nicaragua takes a principled position in rejecting and condemning any action aimed at undermining peace and security, such as regime change, breaches of constitutional order, incitement to violence, the use of force and coups designed to overthrow legitimate Governments — in short, any action that threatens international peace and security. The 33 countries of the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC) recently proclaimed our region as a zone of peace, and thereby undertook, as our Heads of State and Government put it,

> "a permanent commitment to ... the peaceful settlement of disputes, in order to forever banish the use and threat of use of force in our region".

However, policies of subversion and aggression and attempted coups against some countries in our region have continued, as has been the case with our sister State the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, where a coup d'état and the assassination of President Nicolás Maduro Moros were planned. At the most recent CELAC summit, our leaders expressed concern about the aggressions and attempted coup against the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela. Reprehensible acts that do not contribute to the maintenance of international peace and security.

Similarly, we welcome the start of talks between the sister Republic of Cuba and the United States for the restoration of diplomatic relations between the two, which should lead to the immediate lifting of the inhuman and criminal blockade and other aggressive acts against that sister nation. This continued aggression against these two sisters in our region undermine the aspirations of our region to live in peace and security.

In Nuestramérica, a zone of peace, we will continue to fight to eradicate colonialism, particularly in our Caribbean, including Puerto Rico, and to end the occupation of the Malvinas Islands. The occupying Powers must cease these policies that threaten peace in our region.

Seventy years since the founding of the United Nations, the world is again on the brink of another major catastrophe, caused by hegemonic Powers that do not respect international law or the Charter of the United Nations and practice interference, intervention, aggression and crime as methods to resolve conflicts according to their own interests. It is their responsibility to commit themselves, before the peoples of the world, to setting aside their imperial practices and to contributing to our common progress towards a world in which the right to international peace and security prevails.

We call on the international community to work together in this world of profound crises that intersect and interact with each other, and where an unjust imbalance of development among nations prevails. Working for cooperation and development and in solidarity with mutual respect, we can overcome these crises and eradicate, in the shortest period of time, all the scourges threatening us, which constitute major obstacles to fulfilling the purpose for which we are here and for which our Organization was founded 70 years ago — the maintenance of international peace and security.

I wish you, Sir, best wishes for the Chinese lunar New Year, the preparations for which we had the opportunity to witness at the historic CELAC-China meeting, held recently in Beijing.

The President (*spoke in Chinese*): I call on the representative of Viet Nam.

Mrs. Nguyen (Viet Nam): I join others in congratulating you, Sir, on China's assumption of the presidency of the Security Council for this month.

Viet Nam welcomes China's initiative to hold this open debate to reaffirm our strong commitment to the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations. The important theme of the debate is all the more relevant as the United Nations approaches its seventieth anniversary.

The founding of the United Nations seven decades ago was a historic milestone in the advancement of humankind. Guided by the purposes and principles of its Charter, the United Nations has grown to be truly universal and indispensable in coordinating international efforts to address global challenges. The United Nations and its Members have relentlessly worked to reign in wars and conflicts, and have succeeded in preventing the reoccurrence of another world war. We have strengthened international cooperation for development and for the promotion and protection of human rights. We have promoted the progressive development of international law and strengthened democracy and justice in inter-State relations.

Yet, the challenges we face today are ever more daunting. Wars are still raging in many regions, while the risks of armed conflict are threatening others. The threat or use of force and the wishful thinking of power politics continue to endanger international and regional peace and security. Many lessons of history, unfortunately, have not been learnt. This compels us to take up our collective duty to reinforce and materialize the strong commitment to the principles and purposes of the Charter, including the principles of sovereign equality, national sovereignty, territorial integrity, non-interference and the peaceful settlement of disputes. We must also redouble our efforts to address issues such as poverty, hunger and inequality, which are among the root causes of insecurity and instability.

We must all contribute to the maintenance of international peace and security through concrete, practical actions, including the development and promotion of principles, norms and codes of conducts in accordance with the principles set out in the Charter. The Security Council and its permanent members in particular have a special role to play in this regard.

Having undergone many decades of wars, Viet Nam cherishes the value of peace. Viet Nam is strongly committed to the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations and international law, and always contributes actively and constructively to common endeavours for regional and international peace, stability and security. In South-East Asia, Viet Nam is working with other members of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) and partners to develop and adhere to mutually agreed principles and codes of conduct, and sto ettle all disputes — including the East Sea /South China Sea issue — by peaceful means, in accordance with the Charter and international law. We are doing our best to build the ASEAN Community and a South-East Asian region of peace and prosperity.

In conclusion, allow me to once again reiterate our strong commitment to the purposes and principles of the Charter, in the firm belief that peace, diplomacy, law and reason will prevail.

The President (*spoke in Chinese*): I give the floor to the representative of Georgia.

Mr. Imnadze (Georgia): At the outset, let me express our gratitude to the Chinese presidency for organizing today's open debate, and Foreign Minister Wang Yi for his leadership. Let me also thank the Secretary-General for his well-informed briefing.

Georgia fully associates itself with the statement made by the observer of the European Union. In addition, I would like to make some comments in my national capacity. The full text of my statement will be distributed.

After the Second World War, in which Georgia lost more than 350,000 citizens — 10 per cent of its population at the time — the United Nations was established to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war, to reaffirm faith in fundamental human rights, and to maintain peace and security. Seven decades later, we are still faced with unprecedented security challenges in many parts of the world.

We are deeply distressed by the violent developments and rapid deterioration of the security situation in the Middle East. We condemn in the strongest terms all despicable acts of terrorism and violence against the civilian population. Terrorist groups such as the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant threaten the nations not only in the Middle East but in all other places across the globe. It is only with our joint efforts and commitment that we can stop, reverse and prevent such violent actions from happening.

Unlike the expectations of the early 1990s, today's Europe is neither free from confrontation nor at peace. European security is once again being deliberately challenged by Russia's ongoing military aggression against Ukraine. The annexation of Crimea and the tragedy taking place in the eastern part of Ukraine should be duly responded to by the entire international community. In these troubled times, Georgia stands by the Ukrainian people in their quest for a democratic future. We reaffirm our strong support for the territorial integrity and sovereignty of Ukraine and call upon the Russian Federation to stop its aggressive policies against sovereign States.

Alas, the crisis in Ukraine is not an isolated case but rather a part of the broader policy that Russia has pursued in its neighbourhood throughout the years, going so far as to redraw European borders by practicing aggression, occupation and annexation. One further attestation to that is the situation in my country, in the illegally occupied Abkhazia and Tskhinvali regions of Georgia.

Russia's aggression against Georgia started in the early 1990s and deepened in 2008, when open military aggression against Georgia was carried out and the Abkhazia and Tskhinvali regions were occupied. Following the recognition of the so-called independence of both regions, Russia's policy has been nothing but a creeping annexation of parts of my country's sovereign territories, manifested in the conclusion of dozens of so-called treaties and agreements by Moscow with its occupation regimes, providing the pretext for continued illegal military presence.

The pinnacle of this policy was the so-called comprehensive alliance treaties already signed with the Sokhumi region and soon to be signed with the Tskhinvali region, which envisages a full merger in all spheres of the public domain and the open delegation of all powers to the Russian Federation. There is no other name for this but annexation. Russian actions in the region contradict the fundamental principles of international law, such as non-interference in the internal affairs of States, the impermissability of threats or the use of force, the sovereign equality of States, the inviolability of borders and territorial integrity — in short, the Charter of the United Nations.

Despite those provocations, Georgia remains dedicated to a peaceful and constructive approach and has been consistently committed to diplomacy and a peaceful resolution of the conflict with the Russian Federation. Since 2012, we have redoubled our efforts to normalize relations with Moscow to the fullest extent possible in order to create an environment conducive to confidence-building and conflict resolution. Regrettably, those efforts have yielded no results in terms of conflict settlement. We highly value the international discussions held in Geneva and will continue our constructive participation in good faith in the key format established for the implementation of the ceasefire agreement of 12 August 2008.

Maintaining international peace and security is central to the Organization, especially the Council. But far too often, because of the structural deficiencies of the Council, universally recognized principles are blatantly abused. Georgia was most directly and painfully affected by the inability of the United Nations to take decisive action. In the course and aftermath of the August 2008 war, one permanent member of the Security Council and a party to the conflict precluded all meaningful measures to be taken by the Council. We arrived at a paradox. The mandate of the then existing United Nations Observer Mission in Georgia was terminated by a veto, so instead of an increased security presence in the aftermath of a full-fledged war, a vacuum was created in the international security presence. The Syrian and Ukrainian crises are other notorious examples in that mode.

In conclusion, let me once again stress that Georgia remains a strong advocate of the principles of international law enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations. We all should take more tangible and resolute steps towards the realization of our common goal of preserving international peace and strengthening international security.

Allow me to congratulate you, Mr. President, on the Chinese New Year.

The President (*spoke in Chinese*): I now give the floor to the representative of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Ms. Čolaković (Bosnia and Herzegovina): At the outset, I should like to thank the presidency of the People's Republic of China for convening this important and timely thematic debate. I also thank the Secretary-General for his briefing and the Ministers for their participation. This debate offers an opportunity to review the roles of the United Nations system and the Council in maintaining international peace and security and to enable the Council to draw lessons on the understanding of war and the tools necessary for the achievement of permanent peace.

This year, the global community is celebrating the seventieth anniversary of the founding of the United Nations. Regrettably, in the very same year we are commemorating 70 years since the Holocaust and 20 years since the genocide in Srebrenica, while numerous tragic and pressing conflicts still continue throughout the world. The nature of conflict has changed dramatically in the recent period. That fact increases the challenges to the United Nations and the Security Council in accomplishing their fundamental purpose of maintaining international peace and security, the international rule of law and international fairness and justice. Conflicts today are less often inter-State and more predominantly intra-State, asymmetric and multilayered, not to mention the threats of terrorism and extremism as very dangerous forms of transnational instability.

Conflicts are driven by a wide range of factors. They are often preceded by clearly recognizable indicators and warning signs. In response to those warnings, a key challenge for the Council has been in finding consensus on the balance between a response to an early prevention of threats to peace and security, on the one hand, and respect for the prerogatives of national authorities to resolve internal crises, on the other. The crisis that the Council is facing today shows that the balance has not yet been found. The solution could be in better use of the tools provided by the Charter and of the capacities of the United Nations system.

My country, Bosnia and Herzegovina, supports the French initiative on a code of conduct for the use of the veto in the Security Council in situations of genocide, war crimes, crimes against humanity and ethnic cleansing. The proposal does not advance a limitation of the Security Council; it is an attempt to overcome the current paralysis, to prevent future deadlocks, and to reclaim the Council's ability to make decisions that uphold its international responsibility for peace and security.

Many United Nations actors have to contribute to maintaining peace and security. The Secretary-General, pursuant to resolution 1366 (2001), has an important role to play through good offices, such as those of his Special Adviser on the Prevention of Genocide, his Special Adviser on the Responsibility to Protect, his Special Representative on Sexual Violence in Conflict and his Special Representative for Children and Armed Conflict.

The Security Council regularly considers issues of post-conflict peacebuilding. However, it is also important that the Security Council exchange views with States that have first-hand experience in conflicts and peacebuilding processes, which could help in the further optimization of the United Nations mechanisms and enhance a common understanding of existing problems. We strongly support the position that there is a need to enable the United Nations, especially the Security Council, to draw conclusions from its understanding of war and to determine the means necessary to achieve a permanent peace. In many cases, the United Nations still needs to put additional efforts into achieving reconciliation among former parties to conflict, based on an agreed or shared narrative of a troubled past.

The United Nations, as we have heard many times today and I reiterate, has unique legitimacy and accumulated invaluable experience. In that regard, we support demands for more effectiveness in United Nations efforts in the areas of potential conflicts, existing conflicts and post-conflict response. I should like to underline that it is our collective duty to remain persistent and courageous, to have more strength than those who are threatening the peace, and to continue building a better world. The elevant reports of the Secretary-General and the Security Council's resolutions and well-crafted mandates, and our experience and lessons learned remain our best guides.

Lastly, Bosnia and Herzegovina aligns itself with the statement delivered by the observer of the European Union.

The President (*spoke in Chinese*): I now give the floor to the representative of Montenegro.

Ms. Pajević (Montenegro): Mr. President, Montenegro congratulates you on your accession to the presidency of the Security Council for the month of February, and warmly thanks you for taking this initiative and providing a platform for our deliberations.

Montenegro aligns itself with the statement delivered by the observer of the European Union; however, I would like to add some remarks in my national capacity.

This year marks the seventieth anniversary of the founding of the United Nations. When representatives of 50 nations met in San Francisco to establish a new world organization, their primary motivation, as stipulated in the Preamble to the Charter of the United Nations, was to "save succeeding generations from the scourge of war". Although adjusted to a post-war geopolitical distribution of power that needs to be reformed in many aspects, the United Nations has proven to be an irreplaceable universal Organization for fostering international cooperation and preserving peace and security.

Over the past decades, the Organization has strengthened its role by rapidly responding to prevent outbreaks of violence and political crises, and by providing mediation expertise, logistical support and resources to countries in need. With a view to pursuing more durable political solutions, United Nations peacekeepers have overseen the cessation of hostilities and played a critical role in the protection of civilians. They have also provided support to national authorities in the reform of security institutions, disarmament, and the promotion and protection of human rights. The United Nations has also played a crucial role in supporting transitions, including by providing technical assistance and expertise in the organization of free and fair elections in post-conflict States.

Nowadays, due to the internationalized character of social processes and the global impact of regional and local conflicts, the role of the universal Organization is more important than ever. Numerous threats to international peace and security demonstrate that the world needs a stronger, more effective and relevant United Nations system, and imply the need for a responsible approach to United Nations reform. In our view, the security challenges we face can be successfully tackled only through the active engagement of the international community within the reformed multilateral framework.

Montenegro attaches great importance to the improvement of the international legal order, in particular to the United Nations Charter as one of its key parts. There is no doubt that all States must adhere to the basic principles of international law, cooperate with one another with a view to combating all forms of terrorist activities, aggression, crimes and human rights abuses, and bring those responsible to justice. The responsibility for tackling the root causes of conflict and creating a culture of peace, justice, equity, democracy and the rule of law lies with us.

Recommitment to multilateralism and the principles enshrined in the United Nations Charter is central to our efforts to accomplish those goals. In that context, I would like to underline, as on previous occasions of a similar nature, the significance of United Nations early detection and early warning mechanisms, as well as the establishment of mediation as a core function of the United Nations. Montenegro highly values the Rights Up Front action plan, as well as all pillars of the responsibility to protect initiative. Bearing in mind that conflicts over the past decades have almost always started as human rights violations, the United Nations, and the Security Council in particular, should heighten its sensitivity to early warnings of potential conflicts. Also, the United Nations system itself needs to be improved through inclusive negotiations on the main points of United Nations reform in order to make it possible to better address crucial issues of peace and security.

Seventy years after the adoption of the Charter of the United Nations, we must realize that the problems and challenges facing the world today require a collective global response. No other international organization enjoys the legitimacy and capacity to unite the international community in common cause to realize enduring solutions to conflicts and to ensure sustainable peace. Therefore, let us work together towards a world that will bring about peace, justice and security. That is our task, our challenge and our opportunity. Montenegro is committed to playing its role in a constructive and responsible manner in pursuit of peace and stability in all regions of the world. We are convinced that multilateralism is the conditio sine qua non for the challenges facing humanity today.

The President (*spoke in Chinese*): I now give the floor to the representative of Azerbaijan.

Mr. Aliyev (Azerbaijan): At the outset, I would like to thank the People's Republic of China for having organized this open debate on a very important topic. We appreciate the concept note (see S/2015/87, annex) prepared by the Chinese presidency, which deals substantively with the fundamental areas that are critical to the proper functioning of our Organization.

Since the inception of the United Nations 70 years ago, the world has gone through significant and complex changes. The important principles established by the Charter of the United Nations, including respect for State sovereignty and territorial integrity, the peaceful settlement of international disputes and non-intervention in the domestic affairs of other States, together constitute the foundation of contemporary international law and international relations.

In order to maintain international peace and security we all need, first of all, to maintain and uphold the purposes and principles of the United Nations Charter, which provides a firm foundation for the universal application of international law to all Member States. Our Organization is an organization of sovereign States. Sovereignty is the fundamental symbol and denotation of a country's independence, and the embodiment and reliable guarantor of national interests. The sovereign independence and territorial integrity of States must not be infringed upon and must be respected.

One of the main challenges threatening international peace and security remains international conflicts. The ongoing armed conflict between Armenia and Azerbaijan continues to pose a serious threat to international and regional peace and security. For more than 20 years, Armenia has been using force to undermine the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Azerbaijan, in blatant disregard of international law and the relevant Security Council resolutions. It has occupied around one-fifth of the territories of Azerbaijan and has carried out ethnic cleansing against almost 1 million Azerbaijanis. As a result, there is no single Azerbaijani left in Armenia or in the occupied territories of Azerbaijan.

The current impasse in the conflict settlement process does not benefit anyone. No party is more interested than Azerbaijan in finding the quickest possible resolution to the conflict. My country shares the view of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe Minsk Group and the wider international community that the status quo is unsustainable and has negative implications, including for Armenia itself, which, due to its own policies, is sidelined from all major regional development initiatives and finds itself in dire economic and social condition.

The conflict can be resolved only on the basis of full respect for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Azerbaijan within its internationally recognized borders. The military occupation of the territories of the Republic of Azerbaijan and the continued presence of Armenia's armed forces there are major destabilizing factors. Armenia must withdraw its armed forces from the Nagorno Karabakh region and other occupied territories of Azerbaijan, constructively engage in the conflict settlement process and comply with its international obligations.

The cautious optimism expressed by some after a series of high-level talks vanished with the recent and unprecedented large-scale military exercises conducted by Armenia in the occupied territories of Azerbaijan. The Armenian side continues to take provocative steps by regularly and deliberately violating the ceasefire, and by attacking and killing Azerbaijani military personnel, as well as civilians residing in the territories adjacent to the front line. In recent years, such violations and armed provocations have become more frequent.

Armenia tries to mislead the international community by speculating on the principle of the right of peoples to self-determination. Nothing in the United Nations Charter or the Helsinki Final Act can be construed as authorizing or encouraging in any sense the partial or total disruption of the territorial integrity of sovereign and independent States. International law is unambiguous in not providing for a right of unilateral secession from independent States. Armenia itself has never observed the self-determination principle and has violated it by using force against Azerbaijan, occupying its territories, expelling hundreds of thousands of Azerbaijani civilians from their homes, including in the Nagorno Karabakh region of Azerbaijan, and committing gross violations of international legal norms and acts of particular gravity that amount to war crimes or crimes against humanity. Armenia's policy has nothing in common with the realization of the right to self-determination, and is actually the negation of that principle. The sooner Armenia withdraws its troops from the territories of the Republic of Azerbaijan and engages in good faith and constructively in negotiations, the sooner the conflict will be resolved to the benefit of all.

The President (*spoke in Chinese*): I now give the floor to the representative of Latvia.

Mr. Mažeiks (Latvia): Latvia aligns itself with the statement delivered by the observer of the European Union, as well as the statement delivered by the representative of Austria on behalf of the Group of Friends of the Rule of Law.

I would like to thank the Chinese presidency of the Security Council for organizing this open debate in order to reflect on and reaffirm our commitments to the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations.

The debate proposed by the Chinese presidency is both historical and timely. It is important historically, as it lets us reflect on the reasons why the different nations wanted to establish the United Nations. Why was the United Nations necessary? The United Nations was created to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war, to reaffirm faith in fundamental human rights, to establish conditions under which justice and respect for the obligations arising from treaties and other sources of international law can be maintained, and to promote social progress and better standards of life in larger freedom. In other words, the United Nations was created because humankind had learned its historical lesson that the world pays too high a price for the absence of a credible international system. The United Nations was created to put an end to a world where might makes right. The United Nations was created to establish a rules-based system where powerful countries do not annex parts of other countries or whole countries on false pretexts.

One year ago, this would have seemed a historical debate only. Sadly, recommitting ourselves to the purposes and principles of the Charter has turned out to be very topical for all Members of the United Nations and poignant for some. Who would have thought that a permanent member of the Security Council would illegally annex a part of another sovereign country only 20 years after its written commitment to respect the independence and sovereignty and the existing borders of Ukraine and to refrain from the threat or use of force against the territorial integrity or political independence of Ukraine? After thousands have died in eastern Ukraine, the promise of the Budapest Memorandum that "none of their weapons will ever be used against Ukraine" rings particularly hollow. Therefore, recommitting ourselves to the purposes and principles of the Charter is timely and topical, both for the Security Council and for all Members of the Organization.

All States Members of the United Nations are the guardians of this international system and of the Charter of the United Nations. However, the States members of the Security Council have a particular responsibility in this regard. Inaction on the part of the Security Council when mass atrocities are taking place runs counter to the spirit of the Charter of the United Nations. Since permanent members of the Council are granted a special privilege — the veto power — in order to protect the Charter of the United Nations and the international order, they also bear a special responsibility to ensure that this power is used in the interests of common peace and security.

Unfortunately, with respect to recent developments the Council has not lived up to this special responsibility. In the case of Syria, the Council has not been able to stop that State from committing crimes against its own population. It has even failed to authorize the investigation and prosecution of those crimes, blocking the referral of the situation in Syria to the International Criminal Court. In the case of Ukraine, it was not able to stop an act of aggression, which triggered the commission of further crimes. These failures have immense human costs. They allow innocent civilians to become victims of the crimes from which the United Nations is committed to protecting them. The international community cannot afford more failures. Latvia therefore supports the French initiative of a voluntary code of conduct regulating the use of the veto when genocide, war crimes or crimes against humanity are committed.

With the changing nature of conflicts, the protection of human rights and the rule of law are key elements of conflict prevention, conflict resolution and peacebuilding. Serious violations of international humanitarian and human rights law can be an early indication of a descent into conflict or an escalation of conflict. In order to effectively fulfil its primary responsibility of maintaining international peace and security under the Charter of the United Nations, the Council should develop early warning and preventive measures to address such situations. Respect for the principles of the Charter and international law, including human rights law, is equally important to maintain international peace and security in the twenty-first century.

The President (*spoke in Chinese*): I now give the floor to the representative of Armenia.

Mr. Mnatsakanyan (Armenia): We thank you, Mr. President, for convening the present open debate on the proposed topic, which might truly deserve the convocation of a week-long international conference. It is a formidable task to reflect on a 70-year journey since the end of the Second World War and the birth of the United Nations. The Charter of the United Nations insists that there are no first and economy class tickets on this journey, as all nations, big or small, rich or poor, are equal members of the international community.

In our reflections, we also recall that in 1945, only 51 founding Member States joined the United Nations. The membership doubled in the five subsequent years. By 1978, it broke the threshold of 150 Member States. Today there are 193 free nations gathered in this iconic building — including such countries as Palau, Liechtenstein or Armenia, or such groupings as the Group of 20 or the five permanent members — in full exercise of their determination to work together on a common global agenda.

The incremental growth of the membership of the United Nations to its present membership of 193 States is a source of a deeper thought about the privilege to be a self-determined free nation and about the exercise of jurisdiction over other peoples within the confines of the territorial integrity of States. This dilemma has been the cause of numerous conflicts, whether in the times of decolonization or in the aftermath of the breakup of the Soviet Union. This dilemma has been resolved differently in each case.

The present number of Member States manifests the fundamental right conferred to any people to freely express their will. It is a principle of international law and a purpose of the United Nations. It does not necessarily need to challenge the territorial integrity of a State, as many multi-ethnic nations living in harmony, with democracy and justice, or as the recent example of Scotland, distinctly demonstrate. Switzerland, for instance, might even remind us of an example of the free will to pool sovereignties. However, the legitimacy of a claim to govern people out of historical injustice and in a persistent environment of discrimination and intolerance is always bound to fail. If we are serious about our collective responsibility towards each other and about our determination to combat atrocity crimes, then we should not allow the suppression of freedom in the name of territorial integrity.

The Nagorno Karabakh conflict is one such example that awaits resolution. I speak at a time of heightened tensions in the region. Upon the instructions of my Government, I have been regularly informing the Council and the General Assembly about the situation and about our concerns. Today, I once again reiterate the full conviction of Armenia that there can be no alternative to the strictly peaceful and negotiated settlement of the conflict. I speak at a time when the co-chairs of the Minsk Group of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), representing the Russian Federation, France and the United States, have just concluded a visit to Baku, Yerevan and Stepanakert in their continued efforts to foster peace. I once again reiterate Armenia's full commitment to the peaceful settlement of this conflict on the basis of the purposes, principles and norms of the Charter of the United Nations and the Helsinki Final Act and the basic principles and elements identified by the co-chairs of the OSCE Minsk Group.

We are waiting on Azerbaijan to heed the call of the co-chairs and observe its commitments to a peaceful resolution of the conflict. The unequivocal support of the international community to the agreed format of the peace talks and the efforts of the co-chairs remain instrumental for a consolidated peace effort. We call upon all Members, whether they gather in the United Nations or in other groupings, movements or organizations, to remain faithful to this support. Establishing confidence-building measures, including the withdrawal of snipers and the establishment of an investigative mechanism for the ceasefire violations, remains an immediate priority to address. We once again call upon Azerbaijan to act on establishing such measures.

For my people, the past 70 years since 1945 have also been entwined with the tragedy of 30 years earlier. The harrowing experience of suffering and extermination of Armenians in 1915 prompted a prominent Polish lawyer of Jewish origin, Raphael Lemkin, to coin the term genocide. Subsequently, in adopting the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide, the international community recognized the need for a legal instrument to counter this heinous crime. However, today we can hardly claim victory over the perpetrators. The people of Rwanda, for one, would remind us of the price of the international community's inaction and silence. Let us now reflect on the denial of justice and the denial to millions around the globe of the very sanctity of the right to life. Prevention remains as compelling an imperative as ever.

As for Armenians, we will commemorate in dignity the centenary of the Armenian genocide. We will not be alone as many nations around the world stand in solidarity with us. We are not bitter. We have been willing to rebuild relations with our neighbour Turkey without preconditions. We have initiated the normalization process, which culminated in the signing of the Zurich Protocols. Our goodwill, unfortunately, has not been reciprocated.

While paying tribute to our victims, we will also celebrate life, revival and confidence, as millions of Armenians around the world have been doing through hard work. As for the denialists of the Armenian genocide, they only continue to do favour to perpetrators of subsequent genocides. I would therefore once again reflect on the words of Hitler who asked, prior to the invasion of Poland in 1939, "Who, after all, speaks of the annihilation of Armenians?" To the chagrin of the denialists, millions fortunately do, including in Turkey.

The President (*spoke in Chinese*): I now give the floor to the representative of Saudi Arabia.

Mr. Al-Mouallimi (Saudi Arabia) (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset, I would like to extend my sincere congratulations to you, Mr. President, on your delegation's assumption of the presidency of the Security Council this month, and on your outstanding leadership in the work of the Council, including its deliberations on the many important issues being addressed during this period. Moreover, I thank you, Sir, for convening today's open debate on the subject of "Maintenance of international peace and security: reflect on history, reaffirm the strong commitment to the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations". It is a cause for much pain that our discussion on this topic comes at a time when peace and security are absent in many parts of the Middle East, Africa, Europe, Asia and elsewhere.

While the new world order, which was founded in the aftermath of the Second World War and which is represented in the United Nations and its Charter, has succeeded in avoiding a third world war, the sum total of the wars the world has witnessed in various places over the past 70 years exceeds in ferocity, effects and losses a world war, which makes us wonder whether this system and the Charter have truly succeeded in maintaining international peace and security. If we delve into the Middle East region, we will find that in the past seven decades there have been no less than 15 wars, most of which were associated in one way or another with the question of Palestine, and the agony caused by some of these wars continues to affect the region to this very day.

Whoever studies the situation of the region and the wars that have taken place must draw the following conclusions. First, the international community, represented by the Security Council, has failed to prevent and terminate occupation. We are therefore continuing to see the Palestinian people deprived of their right to self-determination and the establishment of their independent State on their national territories in accordance with resolutions of international legitimacy adopted by the United Nations. This situation has led to the outbreak of numerous armed conflicts in the region.

Secondly, the international community has failed to protect peoples from the massacres committed against them by authorities who have lost their legitimacy. Rwanda was a flagrant example of paralysis and disability in confronting horrific incidents that are still a heavy burden on the conscience of the world. Similarly, we see in Syria today the ongoing perpetration of killings and intimidation against the Syrian people through the use of aircraft, missiles, poison gas, blockades, genocide and displacement. These violations occur while the international community is powerless to make any progress on the delivery of humanitarian assistance, let alone the achievement of a fair political settlement.

Thirdly, the international community has failed to address current dangers that are taking new forms, such as the threat of international terrorism. Combating this phenomenon has often been in the form of interim and regional solutions that do not deal with the fact that terrorism is a global phenomenon, disappearing from one place only to appear elsewhere. Furthermore, terrorism is not only a security issue, but also an intellectual issue.

Fourthly, the international community has not yet been able to lay the foundations and set up the rules to help countries to overcome post-war and turmoil phases. We take note of such countries as Liberia and Sierra Leone, which suffer as they oscillate between phases of war and peace. Other countries, such as Afghanistan and Libya, have fallen into the kiln of internal conflicts following earlier stages of combat and so forth.

Fifthly, the high cost resulting from these situations, whether in terms of lost lives and property, missed opportunities, crises of hunger, disease or lost generations, continues to pose a huge burden on humankind, as they drain substantial resources. Had they been directed towards development, construction, eradication of poverty, illiteracy and disease, our world today would be more stable, secure and prosperous.

The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia is a founding Member of the United Nations and one of the first signatories of its Charter. It is proud of its commitment to the Charter. Accordingly, the Kingdom has always been keen to participate in all efforts dedicated to maintaining international peace and security, promoting the performance of this international body and bringing it closer to achieving its noble goals and objectives as stipulated in the Charter, whose realization we all look to see achieved. We keep our firm belief that the ability of the United Nations to carry out its functions is closely linked to its Members' political will to implement the Charter's principles, develop and reform the principal organs of the Organization, and make them more representative of and adapted to our world and the changes that have taken place over the course of the history of the United Nations.

A short while ago, we heard the representative of Israel addressing this vital subject in a cynical manner and with arrogance and mockery. We saw how he gave himself the right to play Oscar voter, giving out awards left and right, while forgetting, or pretending to forget, the extreme absurdity of his country's appointment to a position on the commission dedicated to the elimination of occupation when it is an undisputed occupier. He also forgot to include in the awards he gave out the Oscar for Best Horror and Murder, for the crimes his country has committed in Gaza, Qana, Deir Yassin, Sabra and Shatilla, Bahr el-Baqar and elsewhere. Moreover, he should have given Israel the award for Best Forged Documentary, for its false claims on Jerusalem, Hebron and the territory of Arab Palestine, as well as the award for Worst Actor, for its representative's talk of human rights, democracy and justice while his country violates all these concepts on a daily basis.

In the end, before we pat each other on the back and exchange congratulations on the seventieth anniversary of the international Organization, we must review and retrace its deficiencies and exercise a certain humility and objective self-criticism in recognizing that this system in its current form continues to fall short of its Member States' aspirations and hopes, and in effectively addressing current issues and problems. The most important initiative we need today is the revision of some concepts and institutions. The starting point should be recognizing that what was suitable for the mid-twentieth century is no longer appropriate for this century. We must recognize that the United Nations system is in urgent need of comprehensive reform that would rejuvenate and restore vitality to its institutions and organs.

Accordingly, it is reasonable to say that the Council should start considering how to develop its work and increase its efficacy, credibility and the legitimacy of its representation. If the Council can attain such results, then you, Sir, should be proud of what this meeting has achieved under your presidency. However, if this occasion passes like any other, then we will find ourselves in a vicious circle of discussion and dialogue without the ability to achieve a solution.

The President (*spoke in Chinese*): Given the lateness of the hour, I hereby request that speakers be concise in their statements.

I now give the floor to the representative of Rwanda.

Mr. Nduhungirehe (Rwanda): I thank you, Sir, for organizing this important high-level open debate to reflect on our history and to reaffirm our strong commitment to the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations. The choice of this topic and the participation of His Excellency Mr. Wang Yi, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the People's Republic of China, are testiment to the demonstrated commitment of your country to upholding the principles of our Charter. I also thank Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon for his briefing this morning and for his overall achievement at the helm of the Organization over the past eight years.

We share the views expressed in the concept note (S/2015/87, annex) that this is indeed the right time and place to have this debate. We all know that the United Nations, especially its Security Council, came into existence 70 years ago, in the aftermath of the Second

World War, to rectify the inefficiencies of the League of Nations. The United Nations was established in response to such a magnitude of threat to peace and security and was another expression of the international collective determination to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war, as recalled in the concept note.

Over the past 70 years, although the world has fortunately been spared a third world war, there have been hundreds of inter- and intra-State conflicts, as well as foreign military interventions of all sorts, with the loss of millions of lives. In Africa, for example, nearly one-third of its countries had active armed conflicts during the mid-1990s. The Middle East has never been at peace since the establishment of the Organization; and the ongoing crises in Iraq, Syria and Yemen, as well as the emergence of the Islamic State in Iraq and Levant in the region, have made the situation worse than ever.

As those few cases highlight, our main source of frustration today is the continued inability of the Organization to credibly and accurately predict and rapidly respond to conflicts that may turn violent, and even lead to genocide and other mass atrocities, as was the case in 1994 in Rwanda. While several reasons may be put forward, the evolving and complex dynamics of conflicts and, to some extent, the reluctance of many States to take steps that involve risks and costs, are some of the issues that prevent the implementation of the proactive aspects of the Charter of the United Nations. Nevertheless, the increasing discussions of this nature raise the hope that a multilateralization of conflict prevention could reduce the number of missed opportunities in the future.

In that regard, Rwanda believes in the equal sovereignty of States. At the same time, we have welcomed the outcome document of the 2005 World Summit (General Assembly resolution 60/1) and embraced the principle of the responsibility to protect peoples from genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing and crimes against humanity. In that context, Rwanda believes that peacekeeping, which is the main tool of the Organization in maintaining international peace and security, should be adapted to today's reality and the evolving nature of conflicts. Indeed, Rwanda believes that the responsibility to protect and the protection of civilians should be at the heart of any peacekeeping operation or any other United Nations-backed military intervention.

Mr. President, as you rightly put it in the concept note, we should uphold democracy and the rule of law in international relations. To achieve this goal, we should start by renewing our commitment to reform of the Security Council, which is an undemocratic organ by dint of its composition, inherited from the outdated geostrategic reality prevailing at the end of Second World War. We therefore believe that, in order to ensure the legitimacy and efficiency of the Security Council, its composition should be expanded in both the permanent and non-permanent categories, with the same rights and privileges.

Furthermore, while the main purposes outlined in the Charter of the United Nations, arising from the gunsmoke of the Second World War, were to respond to wars between and within States, including through peacekeeping operations, today threats to peace have become more complex and multidimensional, with new trends and types that are not found in the Charter. The spread of weapons of mass destruction, terrorism, religious radicalization, transnational organized crime, disease outbreaks like Ebola and, in some cases, extreme poverty and underdevelopment all have become major threats to international peace and security in a way that was never envisaged in the Charter. And those issues have become regular items on the agenda of the Security Council and the United Nations in general.

In 1948, the world was more concerned with the security of States. Today, contemporary threats relate to the security both of States and of people. In that regard, we commend the founding Members for making a link between peace and development in Article 55 of the Charter, which is the cornerstone of the modern human security project. We believe, however, that adjustments are needed in order for the Organization to deploy mechanisms that address the root causes of those threats. We call upon the international community and Member States to allow more room for multilateral action against those threats that require a multifaceted and integrated approach.

Conscious of the evolving role of regional and subregional organizations, including the African Union, it is our view that, if used effectively and fairly, the United Nations can provide a proper avenue for such actions. Due to the evolving nature of the modern threats to peace, States, regional organizations and the United Nations have been forging new ways of responding to them. We believe that shifting their attention to addressing the underlying causes of conflict, while at the same time increasing their capacity to streamline and implement their efforts to intervene when civilians are endangered, including the ability to recognize and disseminate the signs of impending or potential conflicts, would increase the relevance of the United Nations and lead the Charter of the United Nations to realize its full purpose.

The President (*spoke in Chinese*): I now give the floor to the representative of Kuwait.

Mr. Alotaibi (Kuwait) (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset, Kuwait would like to congratulate China on assuming the presidency of the Council and to wish you, Sir, every success in conducting your work during the remaining days of the month. We would like to thank you profusely for your initiative in organizing this substantive debate on the question of reaffirming the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations under the item "Maintenance of international peace and security". We would also like to thank you for the concept note you have prepared for this purpose (S/2015/87, annex).

There can be no doubt that the wide participation of Member States is the greatest proof of the importance of this question and your judicious choice thereof. It is an opportunity for Kuwait and all Member States to reaffirm their commitment to the principles and purposes of the Charter, such as non-interference in internal affairs, the equality of sovereignty, non-use or threat of force in settling disputes, seeking a peaceful settlement of disputes and maintaining good-neighbourly relations. These principles together form the foundation of the foreign policy of Kuwait and its relations with other States.

As we approach the seventieth anniversary of the United Nations, the Organization is facing numerous breaches and serious violations of the principles of the Charter that have jeopardized regional and international peace and security. The United Nations has made a number of achievements in defending the principles of the Charter when States Members evince the necessary political will. This was manifest clearly when the international community, through the Security Council, stood up against the flagrant aggression against the State of Kuwait in 1990 and the occupation by the former Iraqi regime. Kuwait is indebted to the international community and the Security Council for this honourable stance championing the lofty principles of the Charter and international law, which enabled it to reclaim its sovereignty and independence.

However, in addition to these highlights in the history of the United Nations and its endeavours to preserve international peace and security, there have been crises and conflicts that have reminded us of the world's shortcomings in abiding by the Charter and international law. The application of double standards in dealing with some conflicts, the precedence given to narrow national interests or the absence of political will have prolonged many disputes, thereby aggravating the suffering of people who have given hope of realizing their legitimate rights to a free and noble life. The absence of justice and accountability, in addition to socioeconomic factors, fuels tension and instability and feelings of hatred, intolerance and extremism. The question of Palestine is the most vivid illustration of that. The international community, through the Security Council, has been unable for five decades to put an end to the Israeli occupation, which runs counter to the principles of the Charter and international law. The real tragedy lies in the failure to compel the occupying Power to implement the binding resolutions of the Security Council.

The Syrian crisis, which is entering its fifth year, provides another illustration of the need to impose respect for the principles of the Charter and international law. The gross violations of human rights continue relentlessly half of the people are either internally displaced or are refugees site and the major destruction of the infrastructure on property is indescribable. The question is: When will the Security Council activate the tools available to put an end to this humanitarian tragedy and bring pressure to bear for a political sentiment ending this crisis, achieving the legitimate aspirations of the Syrian people and preserving the unity, sovereignty and independence of Syria? The Security Council is called upon to activate the tools available to it to uphold its responsibilities. It is also called upon to review and evaluate the appropriateness these tools in achieving the desired objectives.

We welcome the comprehensive review of peacekeeping operations by the Secretariat. We hope that there will be increased recourse to the means for the peaceful settlement of disputes provided for in Chapter VI of the Charter, such as mediation and arbitration, in addition to Chapter VIII, which affirms the importance of the role of regional organizations in this regard.

Before concluding I must refer to the question of amending the Charter of the United Nations, which is an extremely delicate and important task. Articles 108 and

109 of the Charter provide for its possible amendment in accordance with a number of steps and procedures. Important amendments have been introduced to the Charter to enhance the capacity of the Security Council in maintaining international peace and security, most especially when its membership increased from 6 to 10 in 1963. However, in the light of the major developments regarding membership, the changes in international relations and the balance of power, and the major challenges facing the international community in the maintenance of international peace and security, all of these factors underscore the need to reform the Security Council and improve its working methods.

On the basis of our commitment to the principles and purposes of the United Nations, especially in the maintenance of international peace and security, Kuwait supports the reform of the Council so as to enhance its capability and effectiveness in discharging its responsibility and to make it more transparent, representative and democratic. In this regard, we reaffirm the importance of granting a permanent seat to the Group of Arab States in any future expansion and ensuring representation of Islamic States. We also contend that the Council reform must take into account the representation of small States, which account for more than half of the membership of United Nations. The membership of the Council should not be confined to States of a certain qualification but should rather include those capable of performing the tasks and upholding the responsibilities under the Charter. According to Article 24 of the Charter, the Council acts on behalf of all Member States in maintaining international peace and security.

The President (*spoke in Chinese*): I call on the representative of Botswana.

Mr. Nkoloi (Botswana): I congratulate China on assuming the presidency of the Security Council this month. I also wish you a happy new year, Sir.

We align ourselves with the statement delivered by the representative of Zimbabwe on behalf of the Southern Africa Development Community.

We thank you, Sir, for having convened this open debate on a matter which is central to the mandate of the Security Council. Botswana attaches great importance to issues of peace and security and, in this connection, welcomes your initiative to continue the dialogue on this subject matter.

Today is an opportunity to reflect, to celebrate history and to look beyond as our Organization continues to serve humanity. Seventy years ago, the United Nations was born. Its purpose, according to the Charter, was to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war and to maintain international peace and security. Today, these very noble objectives are as relevant as they were prior to 1945.

My country Botswana joined the United Nations in 1966, having just attained statehood. We have come a long way and we have come of age. We owe our existence to the guardianship and the tutelage of the international community. Today, we look back with pride while celebrating our traditions as a sovereign and equal Member of this universal body. As we enter the seventieth anniversary of the Organization, we reaffirm our abiding faith in the fundamental rights, dignity and worth of the human person. We commit to serving the United Nations for the good of humanity.

We believe that peace and stability are prerequisites for the attainment of sustainable development. Causes of conflict include the absence of political tolerance, democracy, good governance and the rule of law, but most important is the inequitable distribution of national resources. The creation of the United Nations and all its organs, particularly the Security Council, as well as the adoption of the Charter, provided a platform for addressing grievances among States and strengthening the rule of law. We cherish these ideals as we strive to achieve a peaceful and just world.

We remain hopeful that the Security Council and Council members will one day unite and act according to the fundamental Charter objectives of safeguarding humanity and defying selfish national interests. This does not mean that the burden of responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security lies solely with the Security Council; States and their citizens also have an important role to play. It is for this reason that Botswana remains steadfast in its support for strengthening institutions of accountability at the national and international levels alike. It therefore remains imperative that we ensure collaboration and synergy in our efforts aimed at fighting threats to peace and security.

As an African country proud of our continental heritage and traditions, we commit to contributing towards the attainment of world peace, not just from the sidelines but also on the frontlines of this body, the Security Council. To this end, we would like to see Africa represented in the affairs of the Council in both the permanent and non-permanent categories. While we believe in the primacy of the United Nations, we would like the Organization recognize the role played by the African region in the maintenance of peace and security.

This debate takes place against a backdrop of violence and bloodshed committed by ruthless and heartless terrorist groups across the world. The emergence of those violent groups is a huge challenge to national, regional and international peace and security and requires our concerted efforts to fight them.

Even as we serve the Organization, we remain concerned by the rising scourge of violent extremism and atrocious acts of terrorism perpetrated by radical extremists such as the so-called Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant, Al-Shabaab and Boko Haram. Those terrorist groups have been sweeping across the globe and carrying out heinous acts against humanity. We therefore pledge to cooperate with the international community in the fight against terror and terrorism in all its forms and manifestations. We owe it to the millions of innocent people across the world who live in fear and look to us to save humankind from extinction.

The President (*spoke in Chinese*): I now give the floor to the representative of Kenya.

Mr. Waweru (Kenya): At the outset, allow me to wish you, Mr. President, a prosperous year of the sheep. On behalf of my delegation, I would like to take this opportunity to thank the People's Republic of China for convening today's important debate to reflect on the founding purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations at its seventieth anniversary. I would also like to take the opportunity to thank the Secretary-General for his participation and briefing.

My delegation wishes to reaffirm its strong commitment to the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations and its key role in maintaining world peace, common development and justice and fostering international cooperation and the peaceful settlement of disputes. We recognize that, since the United Nations founding, 70 years ago, the world has gone through profound and complex changes, but the United Nations founding purpose and principles remain valid. However, as the former Secretary-General noted in the 2004 report of the High-level Panel on Threats, Challenges and Change, entitled "A more secure world: Our shared responsibility",

> "The different societies that make up the human family are today interconnected as never before. They face threats that no nation can hope to master by acting alone — and opportunities that can be much more hopefully exploited if all nations work together." (*Foreword, p. vii*)

My delegation notes that various attempts and initiatives have been started to refashion and renew the United Nations to rise up to meet the new realities and be the indispensable common house of the entire human family, as envisaged in the Millennium Declaration. However, most of those attempts have yet to be fully completed due to the intransigence and lack of flexibility of a few Member States that continue to benefit from the current status quo. Clearly, a new approach to updating the noble purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations to fit the evolving global dynamics, challenges and contexts is needed. We need a more preventive approach to respond to emerging challenges and to use reactionary tools only as a last resort.

To that end, my delegation wishes to associate itself with the African Common Position on United Nations reform, particularly with due regard to the reform of the Security Council. My country participates in the African Union Committee of Ten on that issue. Now more than ever, the reform of the Security Council is a matter of paramount importance.

A more peaceful, secure world is possible only if the least developed countries are given a real chance to develop, since development and peace and security are intertwined. Over the past 70 years, the United Nations has been fairly successful in preventing inter-State conflict. However, it is important to strengthen the United Nations capacity to prevent the outbreak of violence within countries, using the preventive tools at its disposal, while observing the principle of territorial integrity and sovereignty. That can be achieved if the relationship with regional and subregional organizations such as the African Union is strengthened and deepened on the basis of mutual trust. Once collective security is achieved through deeper cooperation with regional and subregional organizations and the Member States themselves, a meaningful foundation for sustainable development and peace will be established. We are passionate about this because of our successful experience in such partnerships in our region, such as the Peace, Security and Cooperation Framework for the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the Region, the Intergovernmental Authority on Development peace processes for Somalia and South Sudan and the Arusha process for Burundi, to name but a few.

Kenya, and indeed Africa, continues to partner with the United Nations and other continental and regional intergovernmental organizations, multilateral organizations and stakeholders to strengthen the rule of law, institutions of governance and human rights. While the responsibility for conflict prevention and mitigation lies with each State, transnational drivers of conflicts must be collectively addressed by the international community through the United Nations. We believe that by strengthening our institutions of governance and justice through the fair and impartial application of international law, we will promote economic and social inclusion. That will help in eradicating inequality and exclusion at the local, national and international levels.

As we approach the expiry of the Millennium Development Goals in September 2015 and continue to design the post-2015 development agenda this year, which marks the seventieth anniversary of the establishment of the United Nations, we have a unique opportunity to write a new chapter in our collective history. Together, we can end poverty and inequality, adapt to climate change, reduce inequality, enhance inclusivity and justice and assure future generations of collective peace and security on a sustainable basis.

In conclusion, I wish to reiterate that my delegation is fully committed to the founding purposes and principles of the Charter and subscribes fully to the greater unity of purpose in shouldering common responsibilities and multilateral cooperation to tackle global challenges.

The President (*spoke in Chinese*): I now give the floor to the representative of Switzerland.

Mr. Zehnder (Switzerland) (*spoke in French*): The maintenance of international peace and security, human rights and sustainable development lie at the heart of the goals that the United Nations system strives for. Switzerland is fully committed to the Charter and to a strong United Nations. It is in that spirit that we approach today's debate and welcome it. I will address four issues.

First, the Charter is the expression of our common commitment to the supremacy of law over force. The prohibition of the use of force, as set out in Article 2, paragraph 4, of the Charter is of fundamental importance. It seeks to ensure the security of all States — big or small, rich or poor. In addition, Member States have the duty to protect their populations, in particular from genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing and crimes against humanity. They must use appropriate means, notably diplomatic and humanitarian ones, in accordance with the Charter, to protect populations from such crimes. Switzerland supports France's initiative to limit the use of veto in the case of mass atrocities. We invite all members of the Security Council — both permanent and non-permanent — to voluntarily to refrain from voting against Council action aimed at preventing or ending mass atrocities.

Secondly, the Charter recognizes that the respect and protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms is crucial to guaranteeing and maintaining international peace and security. Switzerland aligns itself with the statement made by the representative of Austria on behalf of the Group of Friends of the Rule of Law. The duty to fight impunity when violations of international law have occurred is inherent in the Charter. To ensure that a set of jointly agreed rules will last, we must ensure respect for them and sanction their violation. Switzerland's emphasis on the fight against impunity demonstrates our commitment to the Charter. United Nations fact-finding efforts, the International Criminal Court and other mechanisms are crucial in that respect.

Thirdly, achieving sustainable peace is impossible in the absence of a political solution, as shown by the situations in Ukraine and Syria in particular. The Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe has promoted inclusive dialogue in order to advance in the search for a political solution, in particular to the Ukraine crisis.

Switzerland is convinced that political solutions and inclusive dialogue are crucial. We welcome the good-offices missions of the Secretary-General and encourage the United Nations to continue enhancing its capacities, in particular in the area of mediation, and to strengthen its cooperation with regional organizations.

Fourthly, the Charter recalls the key importance of multilateralism. Today's challenges are too great and too complex to be tackled by a single State. Threats such as those posed by foreign terrorist fighters or the Ebola epidemic are illustrations of the fact that now more than ever we need a forum where all States can work together for effective solutions.

Member States have conferred on the Security Council the primary responsibility for international peace and security, and the Council acts on their behalf. It is our common responsibility to ensure that the Council fulfils its role in the most effective manner possible. As the coordinator of the trans-regional Accountability, Coherence and Transparency (ACT) group, Switzerland will continue its efforts to reform the working methods of the Security Council. Switzerland aligns itself also with the statement read earlier by Maldives on behalf of the ACT Group.

Today the world is ridden by conflict, and civilians are the primary victims. Human rights and fundamental freedoms are cast aside. The Charter provides a unique and universal framework to enhance and maintain international peace and security. What is needed most is genuine political will on the part of all Member States to provide the United Nations with all of the relevant capacities to promote international security, human rights and sustainable development across the world.

The President (*spoke in Chinese*): I now give the floor to the representative of Morocco.

Mr. Laassel (Morocco) (*spoke in French*): Allow me at the outset to congratulate you, Sir, on your country's successful presidency of the Security Council for the month of February and on the relevance of the chosen theme, "Reflect on history, reaffirm the strong commitment to the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations". It was a wise proposal on your part, Sir, to invite Member States to reflect upon history, because only history, with a little bit of perspective and objectivity, can enable us to draw the right lessons.

After two devastating and deadly World Wars, which rocked the history of humankind in the twentieth century, the founding fathers, with their experience of this tragic chapter in our history, saw the future and thus drafted the Charter of the United Nations and signed it in San Francisco on 26 June 1945.

The goal is to maintain international peace and security, ensure development and promote human rights. These three principles must be translated into reality through the adoption of a comprehensive, cross-cutting approach based on the rule of law in all aspects of international relations, especially through respect for the United Nations Charter; the peaceful settlement of disputes, including through referral to the International Court of Justice; respect for the sovereignty of States, their national unity and territorial integrity; and non-interference in their internal affairs. This was reiterated in the declaration of the high-level meeting of the General Assembly on the rule of law at the national and international levels, adopted by the General Assembly in September 2012, in which Member States reaffirmed, inter alia, their respect for international law and the provisions of the United Nations Charter.

Committed to the purposes and principles set out in the Charter, the Kingdom of Morocco joined the United Nations on 12 November 1956 and has since been an active member of the international community and a staunch defender of the purposes and principles of the Charter, which have become the backbone of its foreign policy and activities at the international level. The Kingdom of Morocco reaffirms the principles of the Charter of the United Nations regarding the peaceful settlement of disputes outlined in Chapter VI and firmly supports the continued role played by the United Nations as a universal Organization charged with resolving and handing down decisions on matters relating to the maintenance of international peace and security, the promotion of human rights and sustainable development.

The peaceful settlement of disputes remains one of the fundamental pillars of the work of the United Nations and one of its main objectives. That is why my country firmly supports all efforts to consolidate the peaceful settlement of disputes.

The Kingdom readily participates in efforts at reconciliation and the peaceful settlement of disputes, as reflected in the mediation efforts by His Majesty King Mohammed VI in resolving the crisis in the Mano River region. Furthermore, tireless efforts have been made by the Kingdom to stem crises in Africa and elsewhere. As early as 1960, Morocco participated in United Nations efforts to maintain international peace and security, including through its participation in peacekeeping operations in Somalia, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Côte d'Ivoire and Mali, as well as NATO operations and those of the European Union mandated by the Security Council.

Moreover, since joining the United Nations and during its three terms as a non-permanent member of the Security Council, most recently in 2012-2013, Morocco has consistently upheld the purposes and principles of the Charter and worked for African causes.

Morocco currently chairs the Central African Republic configuration of the Peacebuilding Commission.

Similarly, in accordance with the provisions of Chapter IX of the Charter, in addition to socioeconomic policies and the implementation of the national initiative for human development in 2005, aimed at raising the standard of living of its population, the Kingdom has shored up its relations with developing countries in the framework of South-South cooperation and triangular cooperation, exchanging expertise and knowledge, in particular with our African brothers.

In addition, the Kingdom of Morocco, in its ongoing efforts to promote human rights and in the new Constitution adopted by referendum in July 2011, emphasizes respect for human rights as globally recognized, making the space for civil liberties broader and recognizing the cultural diversity of the Kingdom. Morocco was a founding member of the Human Rights Council, created by the General Assembly in 2006, and is currently discharging its second three-year mandate following its election in 2013.

The marking in June of the seventieth anniversary of the signing of the Charter of the United Nations is also an opportunity to take stock and to reflect upon the most effective means to revitalize the work of the United Nations while also respecting the purposes and principles of the Charter. While progress has been made, much remains to be done so as to tackle the new challenges brought about by new changes in the world, including globalization, the socioeconomic impacts of the global financial and economic crisis, climate change, growing conflicts and, especially, the scourge of terrorism.

As was well summarized by the late Dag Hammarskjöld, the second Secretary-General of the United Nations, "The UN was not created to take mankind to heaven, but to save humanity from hell". Today we must act together, urgently, so as to avoid hell. The fight against terrorism must be the top priority of the international community. Terrorism spreads like fire, threatening ever more international peace and security, development and human rights. No country is spared the terrorist threat. Atrocities, killings and violations of the most basic rights, especially the right to life, by terrorists, including Daesh, Boko Haram, Al-Qaida and their affiliates, should encourage us to pool our efforts better so as to better combat terrorism.

My country reiterates its condemnation of terrorism in the strongest terms, emphasizing that it should never be associated with any religion, nationality, civilization or ethnic group. The response to this scourge and others should not be limited to the security aspect but must concern aspirations to a dignified life by guaranteeing the right to work, health and equal opportunity. These aspirations can be achieved only through good governance, the promotion of the rule of law, access to justice and respect for human rights.

It is also imperative to collectively and effectively combat, in a coordinated manner, all forms of extremism, hatred and xenophobia, provocation or undermining of the faith or sensitivities of others, regardless of motives or manifestations.

Finally, it is up to us all, Member States, to provide the necessary means and to reaffirm the political will to support our Organization and reform its structures and its means of intervention, so as to make it an effective tool to achieve peace, security and cooperation, and to ensure the necessary dissemination of the values of tolerance and coexistence for all of humankind.

The President (*spoke in Chinese*): The representative of Iran has asked for the floor to make a further statement.

Mr. Safaei (Islamic Republic of Iran): In exercising my delegation's right of reply, I would like to make the following statement in response to the allegations made by the representative of the Israeli regime this morning.

In general, by continually attacking my Government, the Israelis seek to divert international attention from their own unlawful policies and practices. The Iranophobia and Islamophobia that they try to spread are a smokescreen for hiding the atrocities they perpetrate against Palestinian civilians, such as occurred last summer in Gaza. It is indeed ironic that a regime notorious for such unlawful acts, for terrorism and apartheid policies and war crimes, well documented by the United Nations, should allow itself to make such sinister accusations against other countries. Moreover, a regime that stockpiles all kinds of weapons of mass destruction is not in a position to make false claims about others in the region. The same goes for its baseless accusations that my Government supports terrorism, since the Israeli regime has an unparalleled and perverse record of using terror to further its aims. Contrary to what the Israeli representative claimed, the Islamic

Republic of Iran has always been a responsible and law-abiding member of the international community.

Where Iranian domestic affairs are concerned, unlike the situation created by the apartheid policies in place in Israel, harmony and regular elections at all levels have always formed the sole basis for the decision-making processes in the executive and legislative branches of the Government. While Iran has always tried to foster peace and stability in the region and beyond, the Israeli regime has shown that it can thrive only in a tense and troubled environment. Its agitation and destructive approach to the negotiations between Iran and the group of the permanent five members of the Security Council and Germany is indicative of the provocative policies it pursues.

A policy of occupation is a grotesque manifestation of terrorism and a denial of human rights. We believe that Israel's occupation of Palestinian lands lies at the heart of the Palestinian question. It is also responsible for the greater part of the tension and conflicts in the Middle East. The region cannot enjoy peace and security while the occupation continues and the Israelis persist with criminal acts designed to perpetuate their grip on the land they occupy.

The President (*spoke in Chinese*): I now give the floor to the representative of the Syrian Arab Republic, who wishes to make a further statement.

Mr. Aldahhak (Syrian Arab Republic) (*spoke in Arabic*): I apologize for asking to speak again, in view of the late hour, but my delegation would like to comment on the allegations made by the representative of Turkey in his statement.

Over the past four years of the crisis in Syria, we have repeatedly informed the Council of Turkey's unrestrained support for terrorism and radical Takfiri organizations, as well as its exploitation, along with its allies, of foreign fighters, whom it trains, arms and sends into my country. The Turkish regime has used the pretext of protecting the shrine of Suleyman Shah to justify its acts of aggression against my country. Who can forget the leaked sound recording that unmasked the plans of the current Turkish President, who at the time was Minister for Foreign Affairs and the head of Turkish intelligence, and of other figures in the Turkish regime to target the shrine of Suleyman Shah with shells fired by Turkish intelligence agents in order to provide a pretext for military intervention in my country?

My delegation would first like to affirm the Syrian Government's position on Turkey's recent act of aggression, which we have outlined in letters sent today to the President of the Security Council and the Secretary-General, in which we state that the Turkish regime's acts constitute an act of aggression against Syria's sovereignty and a blatant violation of international law and the Charter of the United Nations. They are also proof of the extent of the ties between the Turkish regime and the terrorist organization known as the Islamic State in Iraq and the Sham. I should also add that the act of moving the shrine of Suleyman Shah from one place to another within Syrian territory was undertaken illegitimately and unilaterally by Turkey, without the prior agreement of the Syrian Government, and can in no way be justified or recognized. The Turkish representative's statement that he informed the President of the Security Council and the Secretary-General about that move is unacceptable. With all due respect to the President and Secretary-General, where is the consideration of the principle of sovereignty of the State concerned? Once again, we ask the Council to condemn Turkey's act of aggression, hold the Turkish regime accountable for its support for terrorism and its recent aggression, and compel it to end its practices threatening international peace and security.

Secondly, regarding the statement made by the Permanent Representative of Saudi Arabia, I would like to once again affirm that a demonstration of interest in Syria and concern for the Syrian people can in no way consist in supporting terrorism or spreading extremist Takfiri ideas, which have no relationship to humanity, civilization or any religion. Nor can they involve efforts to undermine the Syrian State, obstruct a political settlement and spread chaos and terrorism.

Thirdly, concerning the statement made by the representative of the Israeli occupying Power, I would like to say briefly that occupation, aggression and Israeli State terrorism have dogged the United Nations from its inception seven decades ago to this very day. The Israeli crimes will continue as long as the double standards within the Organization do. We should not forget that in and of itself the Israeli occupation is a breach of the most fundamental principles of international law and the provisions of the Charter of the United Nations.

The President (*spoke in Chinese*): I now give the floor to the representative of Turkey, who wishes to make a further statement.

Mrs. Özkan (Turkey): I have to speak in response to one delegation's statement.

We do not deny the suffering that occurred during the First World War over a wide geographic area beyond the Caucasus and in the whole of Europe, including the Balkans. The message of 24 April 2014 on the events of 1915 voiced by President Erdoğan, then Prime Minister, and our current Prime Minister Davutoğlu's more recent statement at the commemoration of the late Hrant Dink speak for themselves. The period is the subject of legitimate scholarly debate. Under international law, genocide is a precisely defined concept, and its proof requires high standards of evidence. It cannot and should not be used randomly or arbitrarily, as defined by the 1948 Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide.

It is important to face history in its entirety and through impartial scientific examination of the historical records so that the right lessons may be drawn and a just memory retained. The narratives of the parties as yet do not converge. We must forge a shared memory instead of sharpening one-sided narratives. In that context, our proposal to establish a joint history commission remains on the table. As underscored in the aforementioned statement of Prime Minister Davutoğlu,

> "Our desire to share in the pain, to heal the wounds and to re-establish friendship is sincere. Our course is set towards a horizon of friendship and peace."

We also regret the fact that one delegation chose to convey a selective and one-sided interpretation of the history of the Cyprus question. Atrocities against Turkish Cypriots are well documented in the United Nations archives. The United Nations Peacekeeping Force in Cyprus was deployed on the island back in 1964. The Cyprus issue has entered its fifty-second year. The Turkish Cypriot side, whose voice cannot, unfortunately, be heard in this forum, can and will certainly recall the facts that were conveniently left untold, in order to help portray the full picture of the Cyprus issue. Turkey fully supports the special assistance of the Secretary-General's good offices mission to find a comprehensive and just settlement to the problem, without further delay.

Lastly, we categorically deny the baseless allegations of the representative of the Syrian regime.

The President (*spoke in Chinese*): I give the floor to the representative of Israel, who wishes to make a further statement.

Mr. Heumann (Israel): Allow me to quote Ecclesiastes 3:7: "There is a time for everything; a time to be silent and a time to speak". When we gather to discuss the values of the Charter of the United Nations, there is no doubt that for some of the countries whose representatives we have just heard take the floor, it is time to be silent and, I would add, to reflect.

We have just witnessed a march of folly of the worst human rights abusers, taking a seat at the Security Council table and attacking my country. It is truly absurd to hear representatives of those tyrannies lecture the only democracy of the Middle East.

As we speak here, Iran is continuing to oppress its own people, while helping other tyrants in the region to slaughter theirs. Iran supplies sophisticated weapons to Hamas, Hizbullah and other terrorist groups in the region and around the world. It is always an interesting experience when the representative of the greatest State sponsor of terror speaks out on the maintenance of peace and security. As we are witnessing the rise of anti-Semitism and xenophobia, I cannot forget that Iran is holding an official Holocaust-denial cartoon contest this year.

We are all accustomed to the lip service of Saudi Arabia, preaching about peace and human rights while continuing to oppress women and deny them their basic rights, from driving to voting and from receiving an education to travelling alone in public. But I would also like to end by awarding the representative of Saudi Arabia a special prize, due to his creative intervention that we heard earlier, in the category of Best Sound, for his ability to tune out the public outcry due to the official stoning and lashing of innocent citizens. Congratulations.

The President (*spoke in Chinese*): There are no more names inscribed on the list of speakers. The Security Council has thus concluded the present stage of its consideration of the item on its agenda.

The meeting rose at [illegible] 05 p.m.